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Sketches of Dingle Parish

William A Matson, Henry Gregory, Rev Joseph M Clarke

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Rev. Mr. Shepard writes down the sick man's confession.
Page 114.

SKETCHES

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THE FARM

THE FARM

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THE FARM

SKETCHES
OF
DINGLE PARISH.


BY A
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PREFACE.



THE following Narrative was written for the (Utica) *Gospel Messenger*, in the columns of which it first made its appearance. The favor with which it was then received, and the humble hope that it may be instrumental in doing good in the cause of Christ and his church, is the author's apology for laying it before the public in its present form.

SKETCHES OF DINGLE PARISH.

CHAPTER I.

Introductory addressed to those readers who think they can take an interest in the affairs of Dingle Parish.

THE various events which have transpired in Dingle Parish are all of a common order, and for that reason are deemed worthy of record. Were they any thing strange or wonderful, I am not sure that any one would become better or wiser by being made acquainted with them. Every day duties, every day temptations try the heart's strength, and these will form the chief subject of our account at the last day.

If my readers expect to find sketched in these pages the picture of a perfect parish, they will be disappointed, for the inhabitants of Dingle are

mortals, and consequently have their failings. If they expect to find in the character of its pastor, a model of a perfect clergyman, they will be disappointed. For, (I hope none of my clerical brethren will take offence if I say it) I never saw such a one; and if I had seen one I would not sketch his portrait, for fear that some of my lay readers might say of their own pastor "ah! he is one of the best of men, but he does not quite equal the Rector of Dingle Parish." Nor shall I take this method of giving vent to my dislike to any particular persons, by ridiculing them for their weaknesses, or abusing them for their faults. My object is neither to applaud nor to defame persons. I wish to give a sketch of real life, with enough of truth to say, here is my experience and observation, and enough of fiction to give unity to the narrative.

I seek in this narrative the good of the Church alone. And when you, kind reader, become convinced that what I write will not subserve that end, you may cease to read; and when I become convinced of it I shall cease to write. In short, let me say that Dingle Parish is neither as bad nor as good as it might be. It is bad enough to give its pastor his share of ministerial trials, and good enough to give him some encouragement, and therefore it is like many other parishes which

my readers and I have heard of, if not seen and known.

Somewhere on this western continent—no matter where—is situated the town of Dingle. If you will go with me to the burying ground, on the summit of yonder hill, we shall obtain a view of the place. The large red flouring-mill, with a pond and race-way beside it, is the first object that strikes the eye. It belongs to Mr. Artman, the wealthiest man in the neighborhood. In front of the mill, just far enough to vex that gentleman on account of the inconvenience it causes him to ship and unship his flour and grain, (but not near enough to have enabled him to prosecute the state for damages at the time of its construction) lies the canal, which winds through the heart of the village, and is overlooked on either side by stores, warehouses, and groceries. Between us and the canal you see two steeples. That with a rooster for a weathercock is the Baptist—that with a fish is the Presbyterian.—The small white building yonder without a steeple, with square pillars, and square windows is the Methodist. Beyond the canal, and not far from the creek, is the Episcopal Church, with Gothic windows, and a Gothic tower surmounted by four white little pinnacles. Behind that thick grove of trees is the house of Mr. Artman. From

the place in which we stand, we can see but the roof and one garret window. Go there on any other errand than to present a bill, or solicit a subscription, and Mr. Artman will be very glad to show you the premises—especially if he thinks you are likely to give a newspaper account of your travels, and to mention particularly your delightful visit at Dingle, where you were hospitably entertained at the splendid mansion of the wealthy Mr. A——.

I believe that Mr. Artman attends no particular place of worship at present. He was always supposed to be a Churchman until the effort was fairly made to erect a church building there. He used to speak in glowing terms of the sublimity and touching simplicity of the liturgy—of the unity and harmony existing in the Church. And when Churchmen were few and the prospect of organizing a Church seemed far distant, he used to declare that he would give anything to have an Episcopal Church in Dingle. But when the subscription paper was drawn up, and presented to him for his signature, his love for the Church had cooled wonderfully; and eventually he became one of its most bitter opponents. I was going on to give some further account of this Mr. Artman; but I shall have more to say of him in another chapter.

Descending the opposite hill is the main road leading to the village. Where it crosses the stream is the saw-mill. Beyond it, where you see the smoke curling among the trees, is a low brown house, inhabited by one of those saints whom adversity has visited, and who has learned the truth of the saying, "it is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting." The good woman of whom I speak has seen affliction, and has exemplified in her life that meekness, patience, and calm resignation which is ever the fruit of heartfelt piety. But I may not even tell her name now, for that would be to anticipate parts of my narrative. In fact the story of this woman is interwoven with the history of Dingle Parish.

And now, having made my readers acquainted with my purpose, having shown them the scene of my narrative, and mentioned one or two of the *dramatis personæ*, I must beg them to wait for further particulars until I can write another chapter.

CHAPTER II.

The Germ of the Church.

It was nine o'clock on a bright Sunday morning in June. The bells from the Presbyterian and Baptist steeples were sounding their first call to the inhabitants of Dingle. Stores, shops, and offices were closed, and the streets which but a short time before had been silent and deserted, were now enlivened with groups of cleanly and neatly clad children. Here might be seen a little brother and sister, each with book in hand carefully folded in a white handkerchief. Then comes a young father, leading with one hand a dark eyed and curly haired little daughter, and with the other a son, also dark eyed and curly haired, clad in blue velvet and shining with bright buttons, the happiest day of the little fellow's life, for it was his first day with trousers and pockets, and his first visit to Sunday School. Then a string of four or five little ones, hand in hand, stretching across the side walk, followed by a grave looking miss of eighteen, their Sunday School teacher. Next a boy, neatly but plainly clothed, leading a sister whose dress corresponded

with his own, for they were children of poor parents. Thus group after group came down the main street from all directions, until they arrived at the village green where they parted.

Near this village green stands a very plain building, which, the moment it meets your eye, you know to be the district school house. As we enter, we find some eighteen or more children, sitting apart in classes of various numbers, watched over by some four teachers. The superintendent is Mr. Brown, a pleasant looking man of about forty. He is busy with a class of the larger scholars; soon comes the time for the "General Exercise," when the whole school recite the Gospel for the day and a portion of the Catechism, both which are explained by Mr. Brown. The Sunday School closes with singing and prayer, the children are dismissed, and after a short intermission, as the bells from the neighboring steeples toll, a congregation of about fifty assemble in the school house to attend services and lay reading conducted by Mr. Brown.

This is the germ of the Church in Dingle. Mr. Brown is the moving spirit of the enterprise; and through his exertions the few Churchmen in the neighborhood had been induced to "assemble and meet together," for the purpose of worshipping God in the manner prescribed by the Church,

keeping the younger members of their families from straying to other folds, and having them taught "those things which a Christian ought to know and practice to his soul's health." Mr. Brown looked forward with hope to the day when he should see a church edifice erected in Dingle. Aware that in such a community, totally unacquainted with the distinctive features of the Church, a prejudice against her existed, he took two methods to counteract it. One was to keep by him a supply of church books, which he put into the hands of those disposed to inquire, and to subscribe, and induce other church people also to subscribe, for a church paper. Copies of these they loaned freely among their neighbors, to show them that the reading which is provided for our people is of a character calculated to nourish Christian piety—and also that men might see the answers to the frequent aspersions against us in different quarters:—by this means too, there was promoted an active interest in the affairs of the Church generally. His other method was, himself to endeavor to set an example of consistent piety, and in a quiet way to induce others to do likewise. For he considered that the most effective argument in favor of the Church, must ever be the consistent lives of her members; and not only so, but one reason for his own attach-

ment to her was, that he regarded the practical carrying out of the church system as calculated to promote a healthful growth in grace. His own family was a model in this respect. Every morning and evening his household was assembled for family prayer. Every poor family in the neighborhood had occasion to know that Mrs. Brown and her daughter were their best friends in adversity, and their best counsellors at all times. In short, while some regarded Mr. Brown as notional, some even said that he was wilful and prejudiced, yet no person could point to an act of his that was mean or unchristianlike, no person ever saw him in a place, or engaged in any occupation, from which he would be unwilling to be called away to the judgment seat.

But Mr. Brown had obstacles to encounter, and he had an enemy. He was employed as foreman in the large milling establishment of Mr. Artman. Of the character of this gentleman our readers have learned something from the last chapter; and it may seem strange to them how two such men could agree together. The fact is, they did not agree; but, to Mr. Artman, Mr. Brown was indispensable. To him he intrusted all his pecuniary affairs, for he found that he was always to be trusted. But in religion, and in many a transaction where strict integrity was

involved, they disagreed. Mr. Artman would have the mill closed on Sundays from a regard to public opinion; but he would have been glad to have Mr. Brown attend to the accounts on the Lord's Day; and upon his refusal to do this, the proprietor of the mill would have discharged his foreman if he could have done so consistently with his own interest. Mr. Artman had a son, a wild, dashing young man, who had been attracted by the beauty and loveliness of Miss Mary Brown. And although from the young lady herself, he received no encouragement beyond that of civil treatment—though his attentions were discouraged by both parents, by the one on account of her humble station, and by the other from personal objections to the young gentleman, yet his father would not believe but that a strong attachment was growing up between the young people, and that Mr. Brown did not discourage it. This gave the employer an additional cause for disliking his foreman. And again, Mr. Brown's zeal in the new enterprize of organizing an Episcopal congregation was exceedingly objectionable to Mr. Artman. He remonstrated, ridiculed, threatened, but in vain. Mr. Brown's conscience was clear, and his heart was in the work.

On the very Sunday of which we have been speaking, Mr. Artman met Mr. Brown as he

passed out from the door of the school house, at the close of the services, and accosted him with,

"Well, sir, so you have been playing the preacher again to-day! I do think you might be better employed. If you will go to church, here are churches already erected, and more preachers than are sustained. I do not think that Dingle needs more of either."

"Sir," replied Mr. Brown, firmly, "we need not argue this point, for we have talked upon this subject before now. I am doing what I believe to be my duty."

"And yet you know that I am very much opposed to this movement. And you know that I have the power to stop the whole proceeding at any moment."

"Indeed sir!" said Mr. Brown, "and how so?"

"By employing another in your place, which would make it necessary for you to remove from the village," said Mr. Artman, fixing his eyes intently upon him.

"I think that would not accomplish it," said Mr. Brown. "But we will have some further conversation upon the subject to-morrow," and bowing he left his employer to his own meditations. At that moment, Mary, who was a little in advance of the parents, met young Mr. Artman, who bowed very politely, and apparently

was about to enter into conversation with her, when he saw his father and Mr. Brown. He looked confused and passed on. The wealthy miller said nothing, but the color rose to his cheeks, and the manner in which he struck his cane upon the ground as he strode away, showed too plainly that he was highly angry.

The next morning, Mr. Artman repaired early to the mill, determined to have an explicit understanding with Mr. Brown in reference to the matters upon which they differed. He began by insisting that his foreman should spend a portion of each Sunday in the office; he accused him of neglecting his business, in order to attend to his pet object, the new church, and finally upbraided him with refusing to discourage, if not actually encouraging, the growing attachment between their children. The last accusation Mr. Brown explicitly denied, and very conclusively defended himself against the former charges. And then, to cut short all debate, he gave Mr. Artman to understand, that he had concluded to accept the offer of a co-partnership with a forwarding merchant in the village, and in the course of six weeks must leave his position in the mill to be filled by some other person.

Mr. Artman had not expected this. He had not dreamed but that the great mill, and its

greater owner were as necessary to Mr. Brown as Mr. Brown was to them. But he was too proud to retract. He would not stoop to apologize nor use entreaty to induce Mr. Brown to remain. He therefore affected indifference, although his looks betrayed mortification.

That day, by one of those coincidences which will sometimes occur, Mary, without her father's knowledge, received and returned, without a word in reply, a letter which James Artman, Jr., had sent her. The same day, Mr. Artman senior, and Mr. Artman junior, were stung, and galled, and wounded, and from that day forward, the Artmans were the bitter enemies of the Browns. Would the father and daughter have hesitated—would they have trembled, could they have looked forward and seen the consequences of this day's events, to themselves and to the Church they loved? I think not; for the religion which they professed and practiced teaches us to do right, and leave consequences to God.

CHAPTER III.

The Parish Organized.

It was at this period that I became more intimately acquainted with the affairs of Dingle. My own parish was twelve miles distant, and as the nearest resident clergyman, I had been frequently consulted in reference to the steps preliminary to organizing a parish. Some months after the occurrence of the events related in the last chapter, I made an appointment to spend a Sunday at Dingle, my own place being supplied by Mr. Shepard, a newly ordained deacon. I arrived on Saturday morning, and before night I had seen and conversed with every person who might be regarded as a member of the congregation. By subsequent visits, and by frequent conversation with him who afterwards became the Rector of the Church in Dingle, I learned more of the character of the Churchmen of the village. I was of course the guest of Mr. Brown, and happy hours did I spend by the fireside of this truly Christian family. Mary had been confirmed the year before, at the visitation of the Bishop at my parish. I had officiated at the funeral of a lovely

son and daughter younger than Mary, and now master John, a fine boy of eight years of age, was, besides his sister, the only child remaining. The little fellow seemed to stand in awe of me, as of some great personage; and though he stood by my side and let me hold his hand, and returned my caresses without fear, yet he was respectful, and while I was engaged in conversation with his parents, he would sit by, listening, as if in the presence of a superior being. His Catechism he knew perfectly, and as he repeated the Creed he would reverently bow his head at the name of Jesus. I talked with him upon the subject of Confirmation, and from his artless answers, I found he had been taught to look forward to it as a rite which he must prepare for, not merely by learning the Catechism, but by leading a godly and Christian life.

Among others with whom I became acquainted, was a Mr. Rekle, a married man of about thirty; and I may as well relate here what I learned of him afterwards. He was one of those stumbling blocks who are to be met with sometimes in other parishes, and who seem to do enough injury to the Church to counteract, if possible, all the good which more devout and consistent ones are capable of accomplishing. He had but lately come into the village, and consequently was not at first

so well known as to enable the others to prevent his acquiring that influence which he unfortunately attained. He had previously lived somewhere where the Church had been the fashionable religious society. He had married a wife who knew little more about the Church than that it had the reputation of being the most aristocratic among the denominations. They both had heard that in order to be an Episcopalian it was not necessary to have any religion, and unhappily they supposed it to be true. With some business talent and a little capital, Mr. Rekle was anxious to make himself a prominent citizen of Dingle, and he eagerly seized upon the enterprise of organizing a congregation and building a church, as one means to push himself forward. He was active in inducing people to attend services; had obtained a smattering of the arguments for Episcopacy and forms of prayer, and did not fail to use them in season and out of season—particularly the latter. He was elected a vestryman when the parish was organized, and politely offered to relieve Mr. Brown of the burden of corresponding with the clergy in reference to making appointments for services, provided Mr. Brown would pay the postage. Thus in a short time Mr. Rekle began to be regarded as much the moving spirit of the undertaking as Mr. Brown. And if the latter was

looked upon as a sample of a Churchman by some, so was the former by others. And he was anything but a sample. He attended church on Sundays when there were services; when there were none he was at work in his counting-room. Every ball, every theatrical exhibition, every travelling circus, every low puppet show was graced by the presence of Mr. and Mrs. Rekle. I should not say *every* one, as sometimes he failed to get free tickets; for Mr. Reckle was a mean and close man. Many were the stories in circulation of paltry tricks in business, mean artifices to save a sixpence, and when in the course of time the services of a clergyman were secured, Mr. Rekle considered himself as acting liberally when he subscribed to his support the paltry sum of three dollars per annum. Better had it been for the Church,—cheaper, in a business point of view, had the vestry voted Mr. Rekle a pension of ten times that amount for keeping aloof from the new enterprise altogether. To many persons in Dingle, the Episcopal Church, its doctrines and usages, were as strange as though they belonged to a new religion. Such persons would naturally form their estimate of its worth by looking at the conduct of Episcopalians. And while they could not but admire and esteem such a character as Mr. Brown, if they were disposed to find fault, they would for-

get him, and criticise Mr. Rekle. Many were the coarse jests, of the skeptical and the reprobate, on Mr. Rekle's religion. Many a one who saw something to admire in the Episcopal Church, and felt disposed to examine its claims, gave over the task when he found Mr. Rekle to be one of the prominent Episcopalians. And more than one person, seriously disposed, when urged to prepare for Baptism and the Lord's Supper, would point to Mr. Rekle, and think himself justified in remaining out of the covenant of salvation.

And now methinks I hear some reader of mine saying, "Well, Mr. Parson, you have given us a case here which is worth considering a little. You have shown us a specimen of a very despicable character, and yet he evidently belongs to the Episcopal Church. Now with all your zeal for 'the good of the Church,' will you be so kind as to tell us how such a man became an Episcopalian, and how he was suffered to continue such?" I will briefly answer, as far as I am able. From what I have been able to learn with regard to the individual in question, it seems that the clergyman who baptized him as an adult, was perhaps too hasty in coming to the conclusion that Mr. Rekle was a fit candidate for that sacrament. No doubt he gave satisfactory answers to the questions which were asked him, and probably his

professions were plausible. It is not a difficult matter to deceive a clergyman in this way. When he came to Dingle he was comparatively a stranger, and of course would be likely, for a time at least, so to conduct himself as to make a favorable impression. And again, as Churchmen were few, and an active, enterprising young man would be a desirable acquisition to an infant parish, the Episcopalians of Dingle were too willing to allow him to be a leader among them. And then, as regards his being a communicant, my explanation is this: Having once been admitted, he became a member of a parish, where, for some time, there was no resident clergyman, and of course his character was not thoroughly known by the minister, and after it was known, suspension from the communion should not be the first act of a clergyman towards an offender; but friendly entreaty first, then remonstrance, then warning, and if these failed to accomplish their end, suspension. And if it be any satisfaction to the reader to know it, I can inform him that after a clergyman was settled in Dingle, precisely these steps, and in this order, were taken in reference to Mr. Rekle. And I am happy to add, that it was not necessary to take the last step in reference to his wife. She became a truly pious woman. But still the example of Mr. and Mrs.

Rekle inflicted a wound upon the infant parish, from which it has not yet entirely recovered.

At the risk of making this chapter too long, I must here briefly allude to another personage, one Mr. Sismond, a man of no education and little refinement, but of pleasant disposition, and who having risen, by a fortunate speculation, from poverty to the possession of a fortune of about ten thousand dollars, felt his importance, and seemed very desirous that others should feel it also. He called on me in the course of the evening which I was spending with Mr. Brown.

"Well, sir," said he, throwing himself back in his chair, and thrusting both hands to the bottom of his pockets, "I am rather disposed to favor this movement of getting up an Episcopal Church here. It will improve the village, and those who like it can have a religion according to their tastes. I have been pleased with what I have heard of your persuasion, and think, on the whole, that I shall like it very well. I have done little to speak of as yet. I am holding back until they call a minister, and if he is a smart man, and preaches to suit me, I think I shall come, and he may be sure of my countenance and support."

"I trust," said I, "that you will not fail to attend, and will find some better reason for sustaining the Church than your mere preference."

"Perhaps so," replied Mr. Sismond; "but you see I am not particularly partial to any denomination. I am rather liberal in my views. I don't care much where I go, nor what the form of the religion is, provided the preacher is a good man, and a smart man, and suits *me*. And if these things are not so, of course I can't be expected to sustain him."

It is not necessary for me to detail the whole conversation here. My readers will see in Mr. Sismond, that kind of man who walks up the aisle of a church pompously with his hat on; enters a pew in a manner that seems to say, "If any gentleman thinks that this seat does not belong to me, I should like to have an opportunity of convincing him to the contrary;" gazes round the church during the service, which he thinks unnecessarily long; when the sermon begins, listens with a critical air, suffers his countenance to betray his feelings of pleasure or dissatisfaction; at the close of the service leaves the church as he entered it, and as he pulls on his gloves in the vestibule, says, "Our minister must alter his tone of preaching, considerably, if he expects my support; such doctrines don't go down with me." And yet such are not by any means the worst of men; they mistake their own position and that of the Church, and a foolish weakness of too much

vanity betrays them into such conduct and such language. Their misfortune is a defective early education.

On the Sunday after I preached at Dingle, services were held by Mr. Shepard, with whom the congregation were much pleased, and even Mr. Sismond thought it possible that he might, on reflection, be induced to give his "countenance and support." In the course of the following week, a parish was regularly organized, under the name of St. John's.

Mr. Brown had entered into partnership with a Mr. Johnson, who was a forwarding merchant. They carried on a prosperous business, much to the chagrin of Mr. Artman and his son. He had some unpleasant scenes in making a settlement with that gentleman, and some few stories, not to Mr. Brown's credit, were circulated. But to these he paid little regard, for they could all be traced to the mill, and the people of Dingle knew so well the characters of the two individuals, that such stories were little credited, and the injured party did not think it worth while to resort to the law in order to silence them. Perhaps the course which Mr. Brown pursued was not on the whole the best for his own interest ; however, we shall see

CHAPTER IV.

Progress and Prospects.

BEING at this time the clergyman who resided nearest the village of Dingle, I could not but feel a deep interest in the affairs of the infant parish. I felt the importance of securing at once a minister for them. But how this was to be done was by no means clear. The utmost that could be raised towards a salary was \$175. From the missionary fund could be obtained only \$75; and I knew of no clergyman who could live on such an income. But a way was opened in a manner I had not anticipated. A vacancy occurred in the academy of the district in which I resided. It occurred to me, that if I could get a clergyman of the Church to fill the position, such a man might be able to visit on Saturdays, and preach on Sundays at Dingle. I accordingly addressed a letter to the Bishop, stating the circumstances of the case, and soon a reply came, telling me of a clergyman who had been about three years in the ministry, and was now officiating at a small parish, where the salary was hardly sufficient for his support; and as he had entered the ministry

burdened with a debt, which he had contracted while obtaining an education, he would, no doubt, be glad of an opportunity to obtain a larger salary. The Rev. Mr. Glascus was accordingly written to, and on his furnishing satisfactory testimonials as to scholarship, was elected assistant in the academy.

The tall, pale, slender Mr. Glascus arrived at the door of the parsonage on Saturday evening. As no notice of his coming had been sent to Dingle, and as I felt an interest in knowing something of the new comer personally, I invited him to remain and preach for me on Sunday. And he did preach, and I was mortified. His sermons, both morning and afternoon, were by no means inferior as to *composition* or *declamation*. And indeed my own congregation were for the most part pleased. But I could not help saying to myself, Does my Rev. Brother realize that he is in God's house, standing in Christ's stead, and addressing immortal souls whom he must one day meet at the judgment seat of Christ? There was life, but a want of earnestness in his manner. When he dwelt upon the great truths of the Gospel, grammar and rhetoric might have been proud of him; but there was a want of that *reality* which shows that those truths are felt in the very depths of the soul. Perhaps I was

hypercritical. I felt so much interest in the new parish, and I had so set my heart upon having one of the best of men at Dingle, that possibly I might have been less disposed to fault-finding had Mr. Glascus stood in any other position.

It may be that some of my readers will think that I am one of that class who place too much reliance upon preaching, as a means of building up the Church. But let me say, that preaching is an ordinance of Christ. And while some may be able to do more good out of the pulpit than in it, yet this does not at all affect the fact that no clergyman, who has a realizing sense of his position, can be cold or lifeless while he stands up in Christ's behalf to plead with immortal souls.

That evening was spent with Mr. Glascus in my study. I offered no criticisms upon, and in fact made no allusion to his sermon, but I turned the whole conversation upon the subject of our duties and responsibilities as ministers of Christ. Every question on the subject of rubrics I endeavored to treat according to its importance. But the main subject of our conversation was upon other things. I spoke particularly in reference to the position of the Church in Dingle, and as his senior by many years, I did not fail to urge upon him the necessity of a missionary spirit, of the need of circumspection in his own conduct,

and of the necessity of showing the inhabitants of Dingle a pattern of Christian zeal.

As it would be a full week before the term in the academy would commence, I went on the following Thursday to visit with my Rev. Brother the scene of his future labors. He was introduced to every member of the parish, and I was pleased to see that he made a favorable impression. He had a kind word and a pleasant smile for everybody, and before returning to my house I began to think that I had judged my brother harshly. I induced him to remain at Dingle until after the following Sunday, in order that he might become well acquainted with the members of the parish. In the course of a few days Mr. Glascus spent another evening with me, when we conversed freely on the prospects of Dingle, but for aught that I could see, he was as much interested on other subjects as his parish. Nor do I think that I could have blamed him for this—while he was obliged to devote the greater portion of his time to the school—were it not that I could not discover that he had had any religious conversation whatever with his new parishioners. He seemed to have made himself very agreeable as a gentleman, and, as I learned from some of the parish whom I had met in the street, generally acceptable as a preacher. I

therefore concluded that he might succeed in drawing together a congregation, perhaps in enabling them to build a church edifice. This was all very well, but what I had set my heart upon was, having the people see and feel that the Church was worthy of its name—that it was a divinely appointed means for nourishing souls and preparing them for the Church triumphant in heaven. The old slander that “Churchmen have no religion” I was anxious to have silenced, by the practical exhibition of the Church system. I had pictured to myself a clergyman going from house to house, instructing, exhorting, encouraging, not indeed by his austerity terrifying, but by seriousness, gentleness, and earnestness, leading the flock to the paths of holiness. But such was not the character of Mr. Glascus. He was a very agreeable man, a very pleasant man, a good preacher. He was at home at a tea party—very sociable at the sewing society. Mr. Rekle liked him. Mr. Sismond promised his “countenance and support.” Even Mr. Artman had nothing to say against him. But Mr. Glascus did not appear to exhibit the missionary spirit. After toiling in the school all the week he took Saturday to rest. And with the exception of perhaps three times in the course of the year, he spent no portion of his Saturdays with the parish. He

drove to Dingle Sunday mornings, and back again on Sunday night. All he saw of the members of the flock personally, was at the interval between morning and afternoon service. I ventured on one or two occasions to remonstrate with him on this subject, but his excuse was, that his labors in the school were so arduous that on Saturdays he felt ill-disposed to visit. This was indeed some excuse, but as trustee of the academy, I had caused an arrangement to be made by which he should have no recitations on Saturday, purposely that he might have that time to devote to his parish.

But I will not detain my readers much longer with Mr. Glascus. The church in Dingle was not built while he remained the minister. He closed his engagement at the academy after a year, and removed to a distant diocese; and I am happy to say that I have since heard better accounts of him. I will therefore leave him with a word or two to my readers. We all, clergy and laity, have a work assigned us—a missionary work—to build up the kingdom of the Redeemer. What progress would be made in this work were all of our clergy of the same stamp as Mr. Glascus? And to my younger brethren in the ministry, I may here offer a word of advice. You cannot make it an invariable rule to address

every person you meet and every family you visit, directly on the subject of the welfare of their souls. But this you can do, so conduct yourself, and so direct your conversation, that when you leave them, they may be impressed with the truth that they have been conversing with one who is an ambassador for Christ.

The vacancy in the academy was again filled by a clergyman of the Church—Mr. Shepard, whom I have before introduced to my readers. Mr. Shepard had married a most estimable lady, who was indeed a help-meet for him. But as I shall have more to say of this excellent couple hereafter, I will not pause to sketch them now. Mr. Shepard was not at first as acceptable at Dingle as Mr. Glascus had been. Mr. Sismond hesitated for a while about giving him his “countenance and support.” Mr. Rekle fawned about him for a while, but in a few months this gentleman received some friendly remonstrances, and in a few months more was suspended from the communion. This act of discipline caused some excitement in Dingle, but the result was highly favorable. Some of the bitterest enemies of the Church began to think that personal piety was not altogether overlooked by Episcopalians; while many who had grieved for the scandal which a false brother had brought upon the Church were

gratified to find that they had now a clergyman who was resolved to do his duty without fear, favor or affection. Soon a class for confirmation was organized; several adults were baptized; the poor in the outskirts of the village were visited; and not only did Mr. and Mrs. Shepard labor, but the young ladies of the parish, and some of the married ones who had leisure, and even one or two gentlemen, were each Saturday assigned some task to do in the way of doing good, either meeting their Sunday-scholars or visiting them at their homes, or lending, or gratuitously distributing under the direction of their pastor, religious books and tracts; and every Saturday when Mr. Shepard came among his flock, the little band of workers would report themselves, and be assigned new tasks for the coming week.

Mr. Brown was a happy man now, for he saw a fair prospect for a church. His success in his new business had enabled him to double his subscription, both to the salary of the clergyman and towards the church building. The subscription paper was now pushed forward vigorously. Even Mr. Artman, to the astonishment of all, subscribed a hundred dollars. But of late Mr. Artman had to all appearance softened his heart towards the new parish; he had allowed his family to attend services in the school-house to

the great joy of Mrs. Artman, who was devoutly attached to the Church, and who had only been kept from attendance by the positive prohibition of her husband. But the knowing ones shook their heads, and said that "something was in the wind." Mr. Sismond, whose "countenance and support" were now fully secured to the Church, also subscribed a hundred dollars. Mr. Brown had given two hundred and fifty, while a lot for the church was the joint gift of himself and partner. After the friends of the cause in Dingle had done their utmost, the paper was circulated freely in my own parish, and we raised \$500 for them. By application to several gentlemen of wealth, who were indirectly interested in the prosperity of Dingle, the amount was so far increased that but \$600 more was wanting to reach the estimated cost of the building.

There was now no resource but to apply to the venerable corporation of Trinity Church, New York. The Church people having done their utmost to help themselves, could now with a clear conscience ask others to help them. Mr. Brown volunteered to bear the application of the parish, and after having the papers duly drawn and signed, the zealous warden prepared for his departure. A journey to New York was not then the easy task it is now. It was measured

by days then, not by hours. As Dingle was not on the thoroughfare, Mr. Brown must necessarily come to my parish to take the stage coach. He spent the night at my house,—a night which I shall never forget, for circumstances hereafter to be related caused me to remember it. I remember well his enthusiastic ardor in the cause—how each part of the plan of the proposed building was described and discussed—how hopefully he looked forward to the consummation of the event on which his heart had for so many years been set, and then the anxiety depicted in his countenance as he thought of the possibility of the failure of his application. In the course of the evening I was called out to visit a sick parishioner, and as Mr. Brown had some business to arrange before the opening of the Bank on the next morning, I left him alone in my study. Returning in the course of an hour, I entered the room rather abruptly, and found some bank notes and papers lying before him, and what struck me as unusual, he appeared confused as I entered, and hastily replaced the papers in his pocket book, but not till my eye rested upon a check signed by Mr. Artman. Knowing the position in which that gentleman stood towards Mr. Brown, I could not help noticing this at the time, but perhaps I should never have thought

of it again had it not been for the evident awkwardness and confusion of my guest as I entered. In a few moments, however, we were again engaged in pleasant conversation, and on the morrow, with a warm pressure of the hand, I bade Mr. Brown a hearty God-speed, and the stage coach rattled away on its journey eastward.

CHAPTER V.

A Chapter of Surprises.

THEY say that corporations have no souls. However true this may be as to such bodies generally, he must be greatly ignorant of the history of the Church in this country, who could apply the censure to the Corporation of Trinity Church, New York. Let one take up the history of that church, and glance over its list of donations. Five years ago it had given away more than two millions of dollars; since that time it must have given upwards of half a million more. And the objects of its bounty have been, not rich and churlish congregations, too niggardly to help themselves, but young and feeble ones, where there was zeal enough and piety enough to engage in the enterprise of building and sustaining a church, and money only was wanting to give an impetus to the infant parish—remote rural districts, where, but for this timely aid, the liturgy would not now be said, and church walls would not now weekly welcome thronging worshipers, holding fast to the faith once delivered to the saints. Untold thousands are to-day rescued from the various

forms and degrees of error around us, who but for the munificence of that corporation had never heard of our branch of the household of Christ. I could point out churches now which are strong, rich and flourishing, which in their early days would have perished but for the bounty of Trinity;—churches which have since made donations to other feeble congregations, amounting to tenfold more than the sum they in their days of weakness received. The good that that corporation has accomplished can never be told. I have often thought that it would be the highest gratification I could imagine, could I but accompany the venerable Rector of Trinity Church, or my worthy friend, the Comptroller of that corporation, on a tour through the State, and show him the many now flourishing spots which God's blessing upon the timely bounty of that body has saved from barrenness and desolation, and made to rejoice and blossom. But even then the whole could not be seen or known. A church thus aided is built, and families gather within its walls. Children are taught to believe and practice the precepts of the Gospel as set forth in our standards. In time those families emigrate to other districts. They carry with them a warm and intelligent devotion to the Church they have loved; they become the nucleus for another parish in some new region of

our country. From the seed thus planted springs up another church, in its turn to gather in and send forth, and scatter blessings in waste places. And thus the few hundred dollars granted to a struggling congregation, benefit not merely those who are immediately aided, but others far and near, and the influence is felt for generations.

Dingle Parish was a successful applicant for a share of the bounty of this munificent corporation. When it was learned that all that could be had been done, the six hundred dollars asked was generously granted, and Mr. Brown with a light heart wended his way homeward. The corner stone was laid with the appropriate rites, and soon walls and tower were raised, and in due time was inclosed what, in that day of less architectural taste and skill than the present, was called "a little gem of a church."

In the mean time Mr. Shepard had not only done a noble work at Dingle, he had won the hearts of his pupils in the academy, gained the confidence and affection of the trustees, and made himself beloved in my parish. After much deliberation he came to the conclusion to resign his post as assistant in the academy and remove to Dingle, that he might devote his whole time to the parish. His missionary allowance was increased, and the congregation, by a great effort,

made up his salary to nearly \$375. I must say, that although I knew that such a step was most desirable, yet I could not conscientiously urge my young brother to take it, for I feared that he would, at the end of the year, find himself where a minister ought not to be, and of all things dreads to be, in debt.

As soon as he had resolved upon this course, however, I made up my mind what to do. He had hired a small house in Dingle, and was making preparations to remove his small library, and had laid out the larger part of what little surplus money he had in purchasing furniture for his new home. But his means were not sufficient to enable him to furnish his house throughout. I persuaded him, however, to take advantage of the close of his school labors, and be absent from his parish for a fortnight, and give himself needful relaxation in visiting his relatives, who lived fifty miles distant. He consented, after much urging, to do this, and to defer his preparations for house-keeping until his return. Hardly had the stage coach, bearing Mr. Shepard and his wife, started on its way, before I went to the houses of some of the wealthiest of my parishioners, whom I knew to be warmly attached to the young clergyman, and laid my plans before them. They seconded them most heartily. I also wrote to Mr. Brown,

informing him of what I had in contemplation, and what would be expected of the people of Dingle. There was quite a stir in my own parish, and the ladies and gentlemen became quite enthusiastic.

One Thursday evening, after the lapse of little more than a fortnight, Mr. Shepard and his wife were welcomed at my house. The good couple little dreamed of the surprise which had been prepared for them. I learned that Mr. Shepard's intention was to devote the next day to moving his furniture and household articles. I endeavored to persuade him to visit his parish first, and tried my utmost to induce him to do so, when at length my wife came to my aid by her entreaties, and on our promising to accompany them, and dine at Mr. Brown's, they were persuaded to start for Dingle the next morning. By various expedients I delayed the time of our departure until late enough to bring us to Dingle at dinner time. After dinner, at my suggestion, we all walked to the future residence of the Rector. As all save Mr. Shepard and lady were in the secret, we loitered behind to enjoy their surprise while they hurried to the house. And a surprise it was. As they entered, Mrs. Shepard uttered an exclamation of delight to find the hall furnished, and its floor covered with a plain oil-cloth. They

opened the parlor door, and lifted their hands in astonishment, as they found that room carpeted, curtained, and furnished with plain but neat furniture. On a table under the looking-glass was a large family Bible. We followed them to the sitting-room; that too was in complete order. But the worthy couple made no exclamation now, the tears were in their eyes, and we followed them to the bed-rooms, the kitchen, the chambers, where hardly a necessary article could be named that was wanting. Such things as their limited means had not enabled them to supply were provided for them. On entering the room designed for the study, Mr. Shepard found his books in order, with pens, ink and paper, ready for use. The surprise was complete. And when we entered the last room the Rector and his wife could refrain no longer. Mrs. Shepard threw herself into a chair and wept like a child. "I never expected this, I never deserved it," exclaimed Mr. Shepard, and the tears streamed down his cheeks. "Who did it? whom am I to thank? What have I done that God should thus bless me?" and he left us. I heard him go to the bed-room below and shut the door. I knew what it was for. He had gone to pour out his heart to God alone. In a short time his wife followed him to the same

room, and we could indistinctly hear them praying and sobbing together. /

After some time had elapsed they joined us again, and Mr. Shepard said in a very calm tone, "My good friends, I need not say that this is wholly unexpected and undeserved. To those who have been so kind as to prepare such a welcome for me to my new home, I know not what to say, for I cannot find words to thank them as they deserve. I look upon it as evidence of that kind feeling which should always subsist between pastor and people, and as a token that God will be pleased to bless my labors among my flock." As the rest of the party remained silent, I remarked to Mr. Shepard that he had been most acceptable as a teacher and a pastor; and that the patrons of the academy had joined with the members of his parish in preparing for him this little surprise. I assured him of the interest which I felt in him and in his flock, and that it was a happy day for me to witness so prosperous a beginning to so praiseworthy an undertaking. I concluded with assuring him that, though every pastor must have his trials, and he could not look forward to unruffled happiness, yet that every clergyman who is faithful to his trust, and *earnest* in the discharge of his duty, may confidently

expect the blessing of God, and the warmest affections of his people.

But the day was not yet over with. A walk to the church was proposed. The work had progressed so far that the building was inclosed, the floor laid, and the carpenters were now engaged in erecting the pews. My readers must not blame the Rector of Dingle and his parishioners, if this church was not built "ecclesiologically." We knew little about such matters in those days. It had been better for us had we known more, though in my opinion there is such a thing as knowing too much about them. The building was plain, square and white. There was no recess chancel, no faldstool or lectern, but a communion table, (which it was not heresy in those days to call altar,) reading-desk and pulpit. We spent at the church nearly two hours in discussing this and that proposed arrangement, telling about other churches, and canvassing the prospects of the parish. Mr. Shepard was here and there, taking dimensions, talking with the workmen, or listening to their propositions, and I saw that he was quite a favorite among them.

At length Mr. Brown suggested that it was time for tea, and we wended our way by the same road we came. "I am sorry," said Mrs. Shepard, playfully, "that it is not in my power to invite

you to sup with me. But I hope we shall have that pleasure shortly." I suggested that we should look in again at the "Parsonage," before going to Mr. Brown's. The proposition was assented to; and as we approached the door, two carriages drove up, and some twelve of my own parishioners alighted. "What does this mean?" asked Mr. Shepard, as he stepped forward to greet them. "We have come to call on the Rector," said one of the ladies. We entered the house, when, to the surprise of Mr. Shepard and his lady, we were met by a room full of his own parishioners. "You must excuse the liberty we have taken," said Mr. Brown, "for, without asking your consent, your friends have concluded to give you a donation party."

That was a happy evening to us all. Everything had been planned for a complete surprise. And though I must claim the credit of having originated the idea myself, yet the admirable arrangement and execution of the design were due to Mr. Brown and his lady. While Mr. Shepard was visiting his relatives, the furniture was arranged in the house. Good friends were watching our movements while we detained Mr. and Mrs. Shepard at the church, in order to give time for preparing the supper. And now the villagers poured in, not only Churchmen, but the

members of the several denominations, each one bringing his gift, and what cannot be said of all donation parties, there was the most perfect order and decorum. All were cheerful, all seemed happy, but there was neither romping, nor breaking, nor soiling of either carpets or furniture. At nine o'clock the party began to break up, when Mr. Shepard stepped forward, and with tears in his eyes, and with a trembling voice, expressed his thanks in a very feeling address, and concluded with offering the prayer for the congregation from the Institution service.

I must not detain my readers with my own reflections on my way home that night. To this day my wife loves to recall to my mind the happy night of the donation party at Dingle.

My next visit at Dingle was to attend the consecration of the church. It was a beautiful Tuesday morning in August. In company with the Bishop, my wife, and two of my clerical brethren, I arrived in advance of a large party from my own parish, and we drew up before the door of our worthy friend, Mr. Shepard. If I ever saw that man happy, it was on that day. Mr. Brown and his family were there to greet us. Mrs. Brown and her daughter wore their happiest smiles, and Master John was running hither and thither, trying to make himself useful.

Mr. Brown, leaving us to ourselves, went walking arm in arm with the Bishop through the garden, giving him, no doubt, a full history of the efforts and struggles of Dingle Parish. At the appointed hour the procession was formed, and marching from the Rector's residence, we entered the door of the new church repeating the anthem responsively. The house was crowded, and after the procession had entered, seats brought into the aisles were filled, and many availed themselves of platforms which had been erected outside of the church at the windows. It was a new thing in Dingle, and if among that crowd there were any who had ever laid it to the charge of the Church that her services were cold and formal, I doubt not they went home with better impressions. The sermon, such a one as was worthy of him who was then our Bishop, was listened to with breathless attention. During the service, I could not but notice the countenances of Mr. and Mrs. Brown, and some others who had taken so much interest in the enterprise. The tears would come, for they could not restrain them.

The benediction was pronounced, and the congregation were engaged in their silent devotions, when a wagon stopped at the door of the church, and a man whom I did not then know elbowed his way through the aisle, and stopping at Mr.

Brown's seat leaned forward and whispered in his ear. Mr. Brown rose, and with a bewildered look, which seemed to be shared by the congregation, followed the stranger to the door. Immediately there was a confused whispering throughout the house, then an eager rush to the door, and no one seemed to know what was the cause of the confusion. A moment more, and the vestry room door was thrown open, and Mr. Harding, the sexton, pale as a sheet, and trembling from head to foot, said, "Mr. Brown is arrested for forgery!"

CHAPTER VI.

Trials.

NOTHING could exceed the consternation in Dingle, as the news spread from tongue to tongue that Mr. Brown had been arrested for forgery. Groups might be seen at different corners of the street in earnest conversation. Two men could not meet, but they must stop and relate, the one to the other, the melancholy tidings, and their conjectures as to what might be the truth. The prevailing sentiment was that of the entire innocence of the accused. Still there were those who either believed, or pretended to believe, in his guilt; and some who had borne the character of scoffers at all religion, significantly shook their heads, and intimated that, though a very clever man, Mr. Brown made too great professions of religion to be an honest one. Some of the hands from the mill, too, revived the old and buried slanders which had been circulated at the time of the rupture between Mr. Brown and Mr. Artman. Mr. Artman's countenance wore the expression of sympathy, combined with a "Let justice be done, though the heavens fall" air. On the even-

ing of the day of the consecration, after the distribution of the daily mail, as a crowd about the post-office door were discussing the occurrence which caused so much excitement, Mr. Artman said, "Gentlemen, you wrong me if you think that in the part which I have taken in this unfortunate affair, I have been actuated by any feelings of resentment on account of former differences between Mr. Brown and myself. A check to the amount of two hundred and fifty dollars in my name has been forged—I do not *say* that Mr. Brown did it. But that that check passed through his hands is proved so clearly that he himself does not deny it. The testimony at the trial may possibly lead to the detection of the real offender. Should this be the case, Mr. Brown's character will be cleared up—as I hope it may be. But if he is proved to be the guilty one, he will meet the punishment he deserves. Mind you, *I don't say* that he is a forger, because I don't *know* it. But appearances are against him. I keep my suspicions to myself." And so saying, the speaker wended his way homeward, followed by a murmur of disapprobation. Still his words had made an impression. No one in the assembly really believed Mr. Brown to be guilty, but it was too evident that appearances were against him, and his warmest friends began to fear for the result.

But we must turn to the afflicted family. When Mrs. Brown was informed that her own husband had been arrested as a felon, a blush of honest indignation suffused her cheek, and I shall never forget the expression of her countenance, as she turned to the by-standers and said, "I should like to know who charges my husband with crime." As the officer drove away to the magistrate's with her husband, she very quietly begged Mrs. Shepard to take charge of her boy, while she, with a dignified air, followed the carriage, and behind her was Mary, bathed in tears, leaning upon the arm of Mr. Shepard. A crowd gathered at the magistrate's office, and the examination proceeded. The testimony against Mr. Brown was strong, and soon Mrs. Brown saw, that however confident she might be of her husband's innocence, he must be arraigned before the tribunal of his country as a felon. It was the conviction of this, not doubt of her husband's innocence, that caused her then for a while to yield to her feelings. No man had stood higher in the public estimation than Mr. Brown. He had been pointed to as a pattern of a man of honor, and a Christian; and now, in one hour he was bound over to appear at the next court to answer the charge of forgery. No wonder that for a while his noble-hearted wife gave way to her feelings. And it was a most affecting

sight. The mother and daughter hung about the neck of the husband and father, and sobbed aloud. Their feelings were shared by the spectators ; there was not a dry eye in the room.

No difficulty was found in procuring bail, and Mr. Brown was allowed his liberty. As soon as the first burst of feeling had subsided, and the afflicted family had regained their composure, Mr. Shepard obtained a long interview with Mr. Brown, the substance of which, according to his statement, was as follows :—

At the time of the alleged forgery there was no bank in Dingle. Mr. Artman, and indeed all the business men of the place, transacted their business at the banks in the town in which my parish was situated. After Mr. Brown had left the mill, Mr. Artman and his son had no intercourse whatever with him. They might have been taken for entire strangers, but for the very cold and very formal nod which the former gave when they met. No business transactions passed between them. It was even believed that Mr. Artman on some occasions acted against his own interest, rather than have dealings with Mr. Brown. One evening, after business hours, while Mr. Brown was alone in his counting-room, he was surprised to see young James Artman enter, who, after a few apologies, stated that his father was under the

necessity of paying a boat captain two hundred and fifty dollars that night, that he had not that sum, and the captain refused to take a check, as he was compelled to pay it out immediately in small sums ; that his father had requested him to take the check to some merchant in the village for the purpose of having it cashed ; that as he had applied to one or two places without success, he was under the necessity of begging Mr. Brown to do him the favor. Mr. Brown very gladly availed himself of the opportunity of doing a kindness to one who had on various occasions sought to injure him, and without hesitation advanced the money. This occurred on the evening previous to his departure to solicit aid for the church. It was this check that I saw in Mr. Brown's possession while he was at my house. And as the act of kindness which he had done was a secret, his intention was to have it kept such, and hence the effort to keep the check out of my sight. This was Mr. Brown's version of the transaction as stated to Mr. Shepard, to myself, and afterwards to the jury at the trial, by the defendant's counsel.

Six weeks of agonizing suspense—to the family, to the pastor, to the church, and indeed to a large circle of friends—and the trial came on. The check in question was produced, and Mr. Artman took oath that the signature was not his own.

The teller at the bank testified that the check was received by him in deposit from Mr. Brown in person. I was summoned as a witness, and stated the facts as they occurred at my house, and it was with the deepest grief that I saw that my testimony weighed in the minds of the jury against my friend. On the other hand, not a particle of testimony could Mr. Brown bring forward to corroborate his statement. No one saw young Artman enter or leave the warehouse, and the whole transaction appeared to have been carefully concealed from Mr. Johnson, the partner. Nothing could be brought in favor of the defendant except the testimony as to character. But on the side of the prosecution two witnesses testified to some facts which tended to throw discredit on the character of the accused, and a young man by the name of Gliding, a companion of young Mr. Artman, testified that they were together in an upper room in the mill playing a game of chess, at the time when it was stated that Mr. Brown cashed the check. Mr. Brown's counsel showed the absurdity of supposing that his client, a man of most unquestioned integrity, to whom a reputation was everything, should, for so small a sum, commit a crime of this magnitude, when with common discernment he must have perceived that detection would be inevitable.

My own opinion on the subject was this : that young Mr. Artman, who was a most unprincipled young man, and who showed a disposition to be a spendthrift, unable to procure sufficient funds from his father, had resorted to the expedient of forging, and watching his opportunity, had made a victim of the man whom he and his father hated. But juries have no right to allow probabilities to outweigh positive testimony; and after a long and patient hearing, a careful examination and cross-examination of witnesses, the jury retired; and after two hours' deliberation returned a verdict of guilty. He was sentenced to five years' imprisonment in the state prison.

I will spare my readers the recital of the sad scene of the parting of the father from his family; for my pen could not describe it, and my heart aches as I recall it. Let a wife and mother but imagine her own feelings when the husband whose integrity she has never questioned, of whom, as a man of honor and a Christian, she has always been proud, branded as a felon, and condemned to years of imprisonment, and herself and family reduced to poverty and disgrace. I can only hope that on whatever Christian wife and mother such an affliction may fall, she may exhibit that Christian heroism which was displayed in the conduct of the wife of my friend. She was not long in

coming to the conclusion that to give herself up to grief was no part of her duty. She was now thrown upon herself, and must provide for herself and children. All her furniture except a few of the plainest and most necessary articles was sold, her house rented, and she retired to that lowly brown cottage on the main road leading to the village, which was pointed out to the reader in my first chapter. There, by the labor of her own hands, aided by the income derived from the rent of the homestead, she lived in retirement, loved and commiserated by all; for whatever a few may have thought of her husband, all admired and pitied Mrs. Brown.

The inhabitants of Dingle generally believed Mr. Brown's account of the affair with the check, and they took no pains to conceal their opinion from Mr. Artman and his son. The young gentleman was seldom seen in society, and then many treated him with marked coldness. Had he been poor he would probably have been shunned by all. But his position as the son of the richest man in the village gave him that consideration which, where virtue is wanting, wealth can purchase. But he saw that he was suspected and shunned; and within a year from the time of Mr. Brown's trial, Mr. James Artman, Jr., had gone to sea, accompanied by his intimate friend, Mr. Gliding.

CHAPTER VII

An Interview.

THUS far in my narrative I have barely alluded to the different denominations in Dingle. My readers will no doubt feel some curiosity to know what was the state of feeling among them with regard to the Church—whether they opposed it or not, and if so, how, and with what effect. The Methodist clergy, who took their turns in preaching in the village, sometimes preached and exhorted against a “formal religion,” and gave their people to understand pretty plainly that they meant the Episcopalians; but this had no effect, either to the good or ill of Dingle parish. The Baptist clergyman was more violent; and—I fear I shall be compelled to add—more bitter. Some four or five of the members of his congregation had joined St. James’, and this made that gentleman feel more ill disposed towards us than he would otherwise have done. But the Church moved on quietly and prosperously notwithstanding. The Presbyterian clergyman, Mr. Hardy, was a young man who had been but a year or two in the ministry when the Church was started in

Dingle. He had received a thorough education in an eastern institution, and was in every sense of the word a Christian gentleman. He had a clear and thoughtful mind, was consistent in his principles and his conduct. He was conscientiously a Presbyterian, and during his residence at Dingle lived in peace with his neighbors, ministering successfully among his own people, and preserving them from those extremes and extravagances which unfortunately have, in some cases, injured the cause of religion in that denomination, as well as in some others. The Presbyterians in this village were strong and flourishing. A few, indeed, were led upon careful examination to come over to the Church. These Mr. Hardy had several interviews with, prior to their taking this step, and, as he felt to be his duty, dissuaded them from it. But when he found them determined, he urged them to act conscientiously, and bade them God-speed. The intercourse of Mr. Shepard with this excellent man was of the most delightful character. They not only exchanged calls but visits, and frequently walked together. Their conversation was upon religious and literary subjects, and not until they had become intimately acquainted did they speak of those matters on which they differed, and then only in the way of question and answer, not to discuss, but to ask information.

On one occasion Mr. Hardy put the question to Mr. Shepard, "Why do not you extend to the clergy of the other denominations those courtesies which they extend to each other, such as making exchanges, inviting them to your pulpit, &c.?"

"Because," replied Mr. Shepard, "that would be admitting that they are authorized ministers of the Church."

"And do you not admit this, then?" asked Mr. Hardy.

"Not at all. While I may esteem them personally, admit that they are sincere and pious, and rejoice for whatever good they may accomplish, yet I cannot recognize them as duly commissioned officers of the Church of Christ."

"And why not?" asked Mr. Hardy.

"Because I hold that they who ordained them have no authority to do so. Our Church teaches that Bishops, and Bishops alone, have the power to ordain. Now whether Bishops have or have not this authority exclusively, is a question which we will not argue. If you wish to examine it I can refer you to works in which the subject is fully discussed. If, however, I have reasons which to my mind are perfectly satisfactory, for believing that Bishops and they alone have the authority to ordain, am I consistent, while avowing this as my solemn conviction, if I *act* contrary to this convic-

tion? If, for example, I believe and teach my people that you and my Baptist and Methodist friends have no authority to act as clergymen, do I not act inconsistently and belie my profession, when I invite you into my pulpit, and thus say by my conduct that you *are* authorized?"

Mr. Hardy made no reply, and Mr. Shepard proceeded:

"You of course do not agree with me in holding that the authority to ordain is confined to Bishops; and you act consistently when you invite me or any other preacher to officiate in your house of worship. But for me to do the same thing would be to contradict in my deeds what I profess with my lips. If I am wrong, I am at least consistent."

"I understand you perfectly," replied Mr. Hardy. "And precisely in this way I reasoned before I asked you the question. Were your premises correct, which I do not admit, your conclusion would be correct also. I love to see a man consistent, whatever his belief; and if I were an Episcopalian I should be a high churchman. For it seems to me that the very moment an Episcopalian admits that the clergy of other denominations are as much authorized to preach and administer the sacraments as his own clergy are, he virtually abandons Episcopacy. It is folly for

an Episcopalian to say that our Presbyterian ordination is not Apostolic, is not of Divine authority, and yet admit that it is just as good as if it were both. If it is not Apostolic, if it is not Divine, then the conclusion is inevitable, that persons thus ordained are *not* authorized to act as ministers. And though I do not by any means agree with you in this, yet I accord you full credit for being consistent. But I have another question to ask you. You are certainly consistent on this point. But I think I have had reason to question your consistency on another subject."

"And what is that?" asked Mr. Shepard, smiling.

"From the conversations that we have had," replied Mr. Hardy, "I see that you admit the necessity of personal religion, change of heart, the need of Divine assistance, growth in grace, and I think we do not differ on the subject of justification by faith. Now I do not see how you reconcile these views with the teachings of your Prayer Book on baptism."

"I do not see the least difficulty in that," replied Mr. Shepard.

"I will tell you," said Mr. Hardy. "In the service for baptism, the minister asks the congregation to unite with him in praying that the child may be 'baptized with water *and the Holy Ghost*'

—that it may ‘receive remission of sins by spiritual regeneration;’ after baptism the minister gives thanks that it has pleased God to regenerate this infant *with his Holy Spirit*. And again, in the Catechism the child is taught to say that in baptism he was made ‘a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven;’ he is also taught that a sacrament is ‘an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace’—not conditionally promised, but ‘*given unto us* ;’ and further, that the sacrament is ordained by Christ himself, ‘as a *means whereby we receive the same*,’ i. e. *grace*—as well as ‘a pledge to assure us thereof.’ And to remove all possibility of escape from this doctrine, your 25th article says, ‘Sacraments ordained of Christ be *not only badges or tokens* of Christian men’s profession; but *rather* they be *certain sure witnesses, and effectual signs* of grace, and God’s good will towards us, *by the which* he doth *work invisibly in us*, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in him.’ Now, my dear brother, I do not see how you reconcile such teaching with your views of practical piety and heart-religion, as you have expressed them to me in conversation.”

“Did it ever occur to you,” asked Mr. Shepard,
: “that we may use the term *regeneration* in different

senses—you giving it one meaning and the Prayer Book another?"

"I understand that, I think," replied Mr. Hardy, "but your Prayer Book speaks of *spiritual* regeneration—of the child's being baptized not only by water, but by the Holy Ghost—of 'grace given,' and of God, by means of the sacraments, 'working invisibly in us.' Now I cannot conceive of any meaning which you can apply to the term regeneration which will explain away this express teaching of the Prayer Book. It seems to me to inculcate the doctrine that the person who is baptized has the Holy Ghost given him to sanctify him unconditionally, and finally lead him unconditionally to heaven."

"I think I can make the subject clear to you," said Mr. Shepard. "You are a Calvinist; I am not. You hold that the grace of God is irresistible; I do not. You maintain that when God vouchsafes to a person His Holy Spirit, that person does and must lead a holy life; I, on the contrary, assert that the Spirit is given to *aid*, not to *compel*; that the person receiving it may 'resist,' 'grieve,' and finally 'quench' the gracious influence. Now, without discussing the question—who holds the correct view with regard to the office of the Holy Spirit?—you can readily perceive that on this principle, which I have stated, it is per-

fectly consistent for one to believe that a baptized person may receive the aid of the Holy Ghost, and yet resist it, lead an ungodly life, and finally perish."

"Certainly."

"Very well, then," Mr. Shepard proceeded, "on the principle which I have laid down, I am perfectly consistent in believing that a person who is baptized, who receives 'spiritual regeneration,' who is 'washed by the Holy Ghost,' who has 'grace given' him, does not thereby necessarily lead a holy life and finally receive salvation."

"I see that," said Mr. Hardy.

"Now let me show you," continued Mr. Shepard, "the reason I have for believing that grace is given in baptism. I hold that no man, of whatever nation or position, can do anything good without the grace of God. I hold that there are heathen and pagans who will be saved, because they live according to the light they have. But in order thus to live they must have *grace* or Divine assistance. God then gives grace to the heathen. He gives grace also to every man, of whatever position, to enable him to live according to the light that he has."

"Excuse me," said Mr. Hardy, "but if all men have this grace, I do not perceive how you can maintain that it is given in baptism."

“Every person,” replied Mr. Shepard, “has grace according to the *position in which Providence has placed him*. The heathen has grace to live as a heathen ; the moment he is baptized he is made a member of the Church, and thereby he is placed in an entirely *new position*, and has grace given him to discharge the duties of that new position. The person who is made a member of the Church is thereby in a condition entirely different from that of one who is not a member ; he thereby enters into covenant with God, and in baptism receives grace, the aid of the Holy Spirit, to enable him to fulfil the duties of that covenant. If this be not so, then I must believe that God requires men to become members of the Church and to do certain duties, and yet does not give them help to discharge those duties. Unless grace is given in or by virtue of baptism, the person baptized is placed in a condition for which he is not and cannot be prepared ; he has entered into a covenant the conditions of which he cannot fulfil ; he has made promises which he cannot perform, because God withholds from him the grace to enable him to perform them. Is not this so ?”

“It certainly is,” replied Mr. Hardy. “On the principle which you have stated with regard to the influences of the Holy Spirit, I do not see how

you can avoid holding the doctrine which you do."

"I conceive," said Mr. Shepard, "that the only way in which I could reject the doctrine of regeneration in baptism, would be to hold the Calvinistic opinion that the *elect* only have grace given them, that grace is irresistible, and *all* the elect are saved. In other words, I must believe the doctrine of spiritual regeneration in baptism, or I must be a Calvinist."

"And as I *am* a Calvinist," said Mr. Hardy, "of course I cannot believe the doctrine. I am glad that I have had this conversation with you, for although my own views are unaltered, yet I am now better able to appreciate your position, and I can understand how you can hold all the statements contained in the Prayer Book, and yet believe in the necessity of faith, prayer, divine renewal, and earnest striving to work out our own salvation."

I have sketched the above conversation as a specimen of the frequent interviews between Mr. Hardy and Mr. Shepard. They never argued on the subject of their differences, but tried to draw out each other's views, for the purpose of understanding each what the other believed. • It would save much needless disputation, and tend greatly

to the promotion of Christian charity, if those who differ were always to act consistently with their respective principles, and allow others to do the same, without, under the guise of charity, sacrificing principles.

CHAPTER VIII.

Troubles and Expedients.

THE young parish, which had begun so auspiciously, received a severe shock in the misfortune of Mr. Brown. He had been its Senior Warden, and in fact its main dependence. His support, his influence, his example were needed now, and the loss of these, before the close of the year, began to be sensibly felt. In addition to this, Mr. Hardy, the Presbyterian clergyman, had resigned, and was succeeded by one Mr. Tuthill, a man of far different stamp—more showy in the pulpit and more violent out of it. The services of the Church were in general well attended, but still the parish, not strong before, had now become decidedly feeble; so that Mr. Shepard, notwithstanding his rigid economy, soon became convinced that the close of his second year in Dingle would find him wanting many of the comforts of life, and in debt for those he enjoyed. Something must be done. Having come to this conclusion one evening as he was sitting in his study, he put on his hat and coat and wended his way to Mr. Williams'. He found Mr. Williams alone,

and, as ever, most happy to see him. After freely setting forth the position of his affairs, and his trials, they both agreed that the only plan which could be devised was for Mr. Shepard to open a school. Other clergymen had done so, and though a task, being itself sufficient to require the entire strength and energy of any one man, Mr. Shepard thought that under the circumstances it was the best, and indeed the only thing that could be done. Mr. Williams promised to consult with some of the vestry, and Mr. Shepard returned home to consult with his wife. The good lady heard him through in silence, without lifting her eyes from her work, without a word or look of dissent or approval, until her husband had unfolded the whole plan. Then, like a judge on the bench, she reviewed the pro and con, and summed up all with saying that she did not believe her good husband competent to the task ; that still she would be willing to endure whatever extra burden might be laid upon her. "The result of the matter will be," said she, "either that you will have your salary raised, or you will leave the parish."

I will not detain my readers with the efforts which Mr. Shepard and his vestry made to secure scholars. Suffice it to say that a suitable room was obtained, and in three weeks the school was

in full operation, with fifteen scholars, at an average of \$4 per quarter. "A very high price," thought Mr. Wiggins, who had received what learning he had in a log school-house of olden time, where a pedagogue had sweat in a room full of urchins, and whose toils were sweetened by the prospect of the rich reward of \$12 per month. "I shall pay no such price as that," said Mrs. Highcomb, "when two dollars a quarter will pay for teaching my daughter all she needs to learn, without filling her head with sectarianism either." But notwithstanding the school was not patronized by these two high-minded worthies, Mr. Shepard was satisfied with the number he had, which, in fact, somewhat exceeded his expectations.

But a clergyman cannot well spare from his sermons and his parochial labors six hours a day. He formed a resolution to study and write mornings and evenings, and make his visits on Saturday, the weekly holiday. The first week this was no light task: still Mr. Shepard succeeded in carrying out his resolution. But sometimes a headache would set in, which would entirely unfit him for close mental application. Before the first quarter ended, Mrs. Shepard saw that her prediction was likely to prove true,—that the task would be too great for her husband's health.

But the vacation of two weeks came, and Mr. Shepard, by sawing his winter's wood, and engaging in other out-of-door occupations, felt himself, at the beginning of the next quarter, quite refreshed and ready for the winter's campaign.

But I must not let my reader suppose that all went on smoothly. Mr. Shepard felt in duty bound to open and close the school with prayer. Mr. Paine, who was an unbeliever, gave Mr. Shepard to understand that in his mind this practice was decidedly objectionable ; for, besides that he did not believe in it, it occupied the scholars' time. To which Mr. Shepard replied, that other parents, the majority of them, did believe in it, and it would not answer for him to go contrary to the wishes of the majority, even if he could conscientiously do so. And as to waste of time, Mr. Shepard was perfectly willing to make up for that by meeting young Master Paine fifteen minutes earlier in the morning, or fifteen minutes later in the evening, which time he would devote exclusively to young Mr. Paine's benefit. But the young gentleman would by no means consent to this, and so Mr. Paine was obliged to remain unsatisfied. Mr. Wardy, a Presbyterian deacon, said he sent his children to Mr. Shepard because he believed him a more competent teacher than those employed in dis-

trict schools ; but he did not wish them to become accustomed to the use of a *form* of prayer. "And why not?" asked Mr. Shepard. "I do not choose to argue the question," said Mr. Wardy; "but you know full well that I do not think that such prayers come from the heart; they are mere forms, and the children will become disgusted with them." "Very well," said Mr. Shepard, "then this is a sure way to prevent your children from becoming Episcopalians. They will see the emptiness of these mere forms, and, as you say, become disgusted with them; and you may be sure they will not like them when they grow up." Deacon Wardy did not know precisely what to say to this, and so shook his head incredulously. But he thought that, at least, Mr. Shepard might so far yield to the scruples of his patrons on this point as to call upon him, or upon the Presbyterian minister, occasionally to open or close the school. Upon Mr. Shepard's saying that whenever he needed their services he would not fail to invite them in, the deacon took his hat to leave. Mr. Shepard followed Mr. Wardy to the door, and the deacon shook him warmly by the hand, and wished him "good evening." "But one moment, Mr. Wardy," said Mr. Shepard; "do you really wish me a *good evening*?" "Most assuredly I do," replied

the deacon. "I would not for one moment have you think that I entertain any personal ill-will." "By no means," said Mr. Shepard; "I merely wished to suggest to you that 'good evening' is a *pre-composed form*, which, by your own confession, does come from the heart." Mr. Wardy left, not offended, but a little wiser than he came; for on his way homeward, as he saluted one after another of his acquaintances with a "good evening," he thought that here was a *form* which he constantly used, and which, if it did not come from the heart, no one was to blame for it but himself.

But I am wandering from my story. The deacon, on mature reflection, did not think it would tell well for him if he were to take his children from school merely because prayers were offered there in a way that he did not like.

But Mr. Shepard had, as all school-teachers will have, some disagreeable cases of discipline, in which parents, not caring to take the trouble to make inquiries, listened with implicit confidence to the statements of their children; and some took their children from school, while some contented themselves with bearing towards the teacher an ill-will which they did not seek to hide. Again, it soon became whispered about that Mr. Shepard was inculcating his peculiar

doctrines among his scholars. The report originated in this manner: The class was reciting in English history, and when the question was asked, "In what year was Christianity introduced into Britain?" Susan Wardy answered, "A. D. 597." Mr. Shepard took occasion to correct the mis-statement of the book, by telling them that the Church was planted in England at a very early day, probably by one of the apostles. He also went on to correct another common error, saying that the Church of England was not founded by Henry VIII., but existed from the Apostles' times. Susan Wardy and some of the older scholars introduced the subject at home, when their parents entered warmly into the matter. At the next tea-party at Mr. Jones's the question was introduced, and although the discussion was not a very learned one, yet it was unanimously agreed that Mr. Shepard had no business to preach doctrines out of the pulpit; and as the conversation took a fault-finding turn, all the exaggerated stories of the children were brought up, and dwelt upon, and magnified, and the result was, that more than half the parents present concluded to take their children away at the end of the quarter—a threat which was faithfully carried into execution—and Mr. Shepard began the next quarter with but ten pupils.

But I must not omit to mention here a passage-at-arms with the Presbyterian clergyman. The post-office was kept in a bookstore. One evening when Mr. Shepard went to get his weekly paper, he encountered Mr. Tuthill. After the customary salutation, Mr. Tuthill asked if he had been correctly informed that Mr. Shepard had stated to his scholars that Christianity was *not* first introduced into England by Augustine, in 597, and that the Church of England was *not* founded by Henry VIII.? To which Mr. Shepard replied in the affirmative. Mr. Tuthill very confidently walked behind the counter, and took from the shelf a copy of Hume's England. Turning over its leaves, he quickly pointed to the page on which it was stated in so many words that Christianity was first introduced by Augustine, in 597, and then turned to the page on which it was stated, with equal plainness, that Henry VIII. was the father of the English Church.

"I see," said Mr. Shepard, turning over the leaves, "that in the margin of the book reference is made to certain writers as authorities for the statements which Hume makes."

"Yes, sir," replied Mr. Tuthill, "I believe Hume generally has good and reliable authorities for his statements."

"In the early part of his history," continued Mr. Shepard, "I see that the names of Gildas and Bede frequently occur; I suppose that they are reliable authorities, are they not?"

"I presume so."

"Well, sir, I have a copy of Bede at home, giving a full account of the history of Christianity in Britain from the first century; a fact which Hume does not think fit to mention. Gildas I have not, but I have seen it, and read a similar account in the original. Besides, sir, I should like to hear this fact explained: I see here in Hume's England, under date of A. D. 411, allusion is made to 'disputes in theology,' and the great number of the followers of Pelagius. How came this to pass in England in 411, if Christianity was not planted there until 597?"

"Well," replied Mr. Tuthill, "even if this be so, I do not see how you can show that the present English Church was not founded by Henry."

"I show it in this way: If the Bishop of Pennsylvania usurps authority over this diocese, he transcends his limits. He has no right here at all. If he had the means and the will to bring an army and compel us to submit to him, we should be likely to yield under protest. He still would have no right here. If in the course of time we should have means to throw off the

yoke, and should take occasion to do so, we should then be, not a new Church, but the same independent diocese that we were when a foreign power obtained, by force of arms, an unjust dominion over us. Now, this is precisely what did happen. In the early days of Christianity, a branch of the one and only one Christian Church then in existence, was planted in England. The Bishop of Rome claimed authority over it; his claims were resisted, but, aided by the sword, he compelled the British Christians to yield an unwilling submission. That Church, taking advantage of the quarrel of Henry VIII. with the Pope, asserted its rights, and came out from the struggle the same that it had originally been—not a new Church founded by an earthly monarch, but the same Church which had been planted in England centuries before.”

“Well, sir,” said Mr. Tuthill, “this is something I never heard of before. Will you allow me to ask if you believe in apostolical succession?”

“I am happy to say,” said Mr. Shepard, “that you and I substantially agree upon that point. We both believe in apostolical succession.”

“How so?” asked Mr. Tuthill, with a look of unutterable astonishment.

“You are a Presbyterian, I believe?”

"I am, sir."

"And not a Congregationalist?"

"Not by any means."

"You do not, then, consider that laymen have the right to ordain?"

"No, sir," replied Mr. Tuthill, "nor prelatical bishops either."

Mr. Shepard bowed and proceeded:

"You then were ordained by presbyters. If your ordination had been by laymen, it would have been invalid, would it not?"

"Certainly," said Mr. Tuthill, who was a strong Presbyterian.

"These presbyters must have been ordained by other presbyters, or their ordination would not have been valid. And so of their predecessors, up to the time of the Reformation, and beyond the Reformation to the time of the Apostles."

Mr. Tuthill looked a little disconcerted, but did not reply.

"And so," continued Mr. Shepard, "you and I both hold to apostolic succession,—you through the line of presbyters, and I through the line of bishops."

"I must say," replied Mr. Tuthill, "that I think you pervert history and use very strange arguments. Good evening."

"Good evening," replied Mr. Shepard.

There was a suppressed titter among the bystanders as Mr. Tuthill retired, of which Mr. Shepard took no notice whatever. He very quietly asked for his mail—which that evening consisted of a paper and a letter bearing a foreign stamp—and as quietly retired.

The news spread, as news will spread in a country village, that the two clergymen had had a discussion in the post-office, in which the Episcopal clergyman had come off the better. There is always an objection to discussing religious subjects in places of promiscuous resort. Both clergymen, no doubt, would assent to this; but the probability is, that when they began their conversation they little thought where it would terminate. But however this may be, the news spread, and now many who before this would not have joined in the cry sped on its errand the story that Mr. Shepard taught sectarianism in his school; and before the close of the week more scholars were withdrawn; and at the close of the quarter, precisely a year from the opening of the school, Mr. Shepard resigned his office as village pedagogue.

CHAPTER IX.

The Mysterious Letter.

BUT we must follow Mr. Shepard to his home. Mrs. Shepard had disposed of her more active household duties, and was, as usual at this hour, sitting at the table engaged in her sewing. Little Mary was sitting at her mother's feet, amusing herself with examining the mysteries of an old spelling-book with pictures, which her father had brought from the school-room. Mrs. Shepard had always a smile for her husband, and as he entered the room she received him as usual, though Mr. Shepard had of late begun to think that he could read in his wife's countenance, "A school and a parish are too much for one man."

"And what have you here?" said Mrs. Shepard, as her husband laid the mail upon the table.

"Wait till I have kissed the little dear," said he, taking Mary upon his lap.

"Why, here is a letter from Liverpool," said his wife. "I did not know that you had a foreign correspondent."

"Nor I," said Mr. Shepard. "Perhaps,"

added he, playfully, and tossing the child, "perhaps it is from some unknown relative, telling me that I have become heir to an immense fortune!—who knows? And then we'll build a parsonage in Dingle, and have an organ, and little Mary shall play the organ!" And little Mary laughed, as though she understood every word.

"Come, come, Charles, I am growing impatient," said Mrs. Shepard, laughing; "do let us see what the letter can be."

"Well," said Mr. Shepard. "Now, little Mary, keep quiet, and I will read to her about the ten thousand pounds in money that's going to build the parsonage and the organ." And thus he chatted, while with his penknife he cut the seal. "We'll first see who it is from," said he, as he unfolded the sheet. "This is singular!—no name signed to it!" And he glanced over the contents of the epistle in silence.

"Why, what is it?" asked his wife.

"Wait a moment, my dear," said Mr. Shepard, rising and pacing the floor, with one hand on his forehead and the letter crushed in the other. His playfulness was gone, and his wife followed him with her eyes as he walked to and fro, with a disturbed look. Several times he returned to the table and carefully read and re-read the letter, turned it over and examined the superscription,

and then paced the floor again, as if in a deep study.

"Do tell me, husband," said Mrs. Shepard, "what disturbs you so?"

"My dear," said he, stopping suddenly, "I do not know whether I ought to do so or not. There is something very singular. It may be a hoax. But," added he, thoughtfully, "who would?—and what motive? Wife," said he, as he drew the chair near the table and seated himself, "perhaps you can help me. At all events, I will read the letter."

"REV. MR. SHEPARD:

"DEAR SIR—Mr. Brown is not guilty. The real offender may never be brought to justice; but believe me, the time will come when what I have here asserted will be made clear. To make the contents of this letter public will be of no service to the cause of the injured. Perhaps it will have no weight with you. But all I ask is this, that when you visit Mrs. Brown again, if you are tempted to believe that it is but a wife's fondness that induces her to fancy her husband innocent, you will allow yourself to think that it is *very possible* that she may be right, all appearances to the contrary notwithstanding.

"Very sincerely yours,

"_____."

The husband and wife looked at each other for some moments in silence.

"What do you think of it?" at length asked Mrs. Shepard.

"I cannot tell what to think," replied the husband, "and therefore I read the letter to you."

The pastor and his wife then joined in an earnest conversation, endeavoring to arrive at some conclusion. One thing was certain, the letter did come from Liverpool; and that was all the certainty in the case. Some person, but what person neither of them could tell, no doubt believed Mr. Brown to be innocent; but there was no proof that this was not a foolish hoax—though what motive could prompt to such an act it was impossible to conceive. They at length arrived at the conclusion that it might be *very possible* that conclusive evidence might at length be obtained that Mr. Brown was unjustly imprisoned, but they had no grounds for expressing such an opinion to others, or for acting upon such a mere conjecture. It was late before the pastor and his wife retired that night. The good man had several times entered his study for the purpose of composing his thoughts to prepare a sermon; but the letter would drive out all other thoughts, and he would return to his wife again to conjecture possibilities and probabilities, but no clue could

they find to the author of the mysterious letter, and no satisfaction could they derive as to the reliance to be placed on its testimony.

The next day Mr. Shepard was constantly haunted by the remembrance of the mysterious letter. In the study or in the school, it would still rise up in his mind, and he often found himself abstracted from things around him and speculating upon various solutions as to its origin and authorship. After school was dismissed for the day, he called at Mrs. Brown's to see Mary, who for three weeks past had been confined to her bed by a severe illness. He knocked gently at the door, and Mrs. Brown, with her usual cheerful smile, admitted him.

"She had a bad night," said Mrs. Brown, in answer to his inquiries, "and the doctor thinks she may not remain long with us. Still," she added, as she wiped a tear from her eye, "she had a more refreshing sleep this morning, and I think she is better this afternoon. Would you like to see her, sir?"

Mr. Shepard assented, and was led to Mary's room on the floor above. Mrs. Brown drew aside the window curtains; Mary was lying on a bed in the corner of the room. She stretched out her thin white hand to welcome her pastor as he approached the bedside.

"You have been worse since I saw you," said Mr. Shepard ; "but I hope I find you better this afternoon."

"Not much, sir," said she, "and I suppose I must now give up all hopes of living till he returns."

"It is not quite two years," said Mr. Shepard, "and you may yet be spared till that time."

"No, no : I feel that I cannot live two years longer. I have never thought that I should recover from this ; I knew that I must die, and I was willing to go ; but I did wish to see——Mother," said she, as she saw the tears coming down her cheek, "let me tell you what I was thinking of as you came in. It was this : we can never be as we ought until God has taught us the full meaning of the prayer we daily offer——'Thy will be done.'"

"Your afflictions have doubtless been the means of bringing you to realize this," Mr. Shepard replied.

"Had I improved them properly," said Mary, "doubtless I might have been able to submit cheerfully. When our last affliction befell us, I found it hard to say, 'Thy *will* be done ;' but I hoped I had become reconciled to that, and when my sickness commenced, I felt it was God's will, and I *could* part with this world cheerfully. I

did not know of anything that I desired which I would not be willing to give up. But then I had the prospect of a long sickness before me. I did not think that I should be taken away so soon, and I doubted not that I should be spared till my father's return. But now I must give up that hope also. It is right, I know it is, but I cannot but *wish* that it might be otherwise."

Perceiving that she was becoming too much excited, and that to suffer her to continue to speak might be of injury to her, Mr. Shepard felt it his duty to make this interview as brief as possible. "There is a passage," said he, "which I trust may be applied to your case—'As thy days, so shall thy strength be.' God sends us strength *with* our trials. He who has enabled you to bear up under your afflictions thus far will not forsake you now. He gave you grace to be resigned on former occasions, and He will help you under your new affliction."

He then knelt down and offered a prayer appropriate to her circumstances, and Mary and her mother joined fervently in the responses.

Mr. Shepard sat down with Mrs. Brown in the room below, and with his mind still upon the contents of the mysterious letter, entered into a long conversation on the subject of her afflictions ;

hoping that, if possible, some trifling circumstances, before unnoticed, might be called up, which would give him some clue to the authorship of the letter, or enable him to conjecture upon what ground the writer of it felt authorized to express, so positively, his conviction that Mr. Brown would at length be proved innocent. He also endeavored so to guard his conversation that Mrs. Brown might not suspect that anything new had transpired in reference to the subject upon which she was so deeply interested. She had always believed that something would yet occur which would restore her husband to her before his term of imprisonment should expire. Knowing this to be her feeling, Mr. Shepard was particularly careful to say nothing to raise hopes which might be blasted. But with all his caution, when he left the house, Mrs. Brown expressed herself gratified that her pastor had talked more encouragingly than usual.

On his way homeward Mr. Shepard, still revolving the subject in his mind, met Mr. Johnson, Mr. Brown's former partner, who informed him that Mr. Artman had heard from his son James. He had been taken sick, and was lying in a foreign port waiting for strength to enable him to return.

"What port?" asked Mr. Shepard, eagerly.

"Liverpool!"

A gleam of light seemed to flash across Mr. Shepard's mind at once. He began to think that now there might be some hope of unravelling the mystery of the anonymous letter.

CHAPTER X.

A Variety.

THE reader is already apprised of the fact that Mr. Shepard gave up his school at the close of the year. He found himself in better spirits than when he commenced the work, though not in better health. He had been overtaken, and it had worn upon him. But when he sat down to count his gains, he found that enough had been realized to pay his outstanding debts; every little bill at the stores was settled, and he rejoiced in the possession of ten dollars surplus, which ten dollars in less than a fortnight was reduced to the sum of fifty cents. But in four weeks his next quarter's salary would become due, and then he should have a full purse once more. Mr. Shepard's heart was moreover gladdened by the removal into the village of another family, that of a rich manufacturer, who had taken a seat in the church, and had generously subscribed the sum of fifty dollars a year to the clergyman's salary.

The good man's purse had run low—down to the very bottom. The firm resolution not to run in debt was again broken over, for Mr. Shepard had found that to ask the vestry to advance him

a portion of his salary, was but to give them an excuse for being dilatory in paying the balance. His good neighbor, Mr. Williams, came to his aid; but wood and butter, and the winter's supply of beef, soon exhausted the ten dollars thus obtained, and he was again penniless. About this time his friend, the Rev. Mr. Nottingham, from a new parish which had lately been started in the neighborhood, made him an afternoon's visit. Mr. Nottingham had come to propose an exchange for the following Sunday, to which Mr. Shepard most cheerfully acceded. The young clergyman was just at that interesting period when—but I will not take my reader through pleasant groves and flowery fields, but tell him, point blank, that the Rev. Mr. Nottingham was about to be married; and to the daughter of the wealthy manufacturer who had lately removed to Dingle, taken a pew, and contributed so liberally to Mr. Shepard's salary. Of course it is needless to inform the reader that Miss Maynard was the chief topic of conversation that afternoon; and had I time and space, I might here record many very useful practical suggestions given by Mrs. Shepard in relation to the position, trials, and duties of ministers' wives, and the economical management of a minister's household; to all which, I am sorry to say, the young divine did not listen as attentively as be-

came him ; for he would continually interrupt Mrs. Shepard by telling her that on this and that point Miss Maynard appeared to be perfectly qualified: there was no danger that she would make trouble in the parish by being partial in her attentions, slighting some and being too intimate with others—dressing so gaily as to offend the poor, or so plainly as to displease the rich—being extravagant, or wasteful, or penurious—shrinking from unpleasant duties, or in any other way giving just cause for scandal. For on all these points, Mr. Nottingham assured Mrs. Shepard that he had studied her character, and knew that she could be relied upon.

Occasionally, as he glanced at Mrs. Shepard, he would find her trying to suppress a smile ; and then he would say :

“ I know you think I am partial, but I can assure you I studied her character carefully and candidly before we were engaged, and while I know her good points, I am not blind to her faults.”

“ My dear Mr. Nottingham,” said Mrs. Shepard, “ do, for old acquaintance’ sake, make a confidant of me, and tell me what her faults are.”

“ Certainly,” replied Mr. Nottingham, “ certainly. She is—ah—she is—well, you know she is young.”

"Yes," said Mrs. Shepard, looking as grave as possible under the circumstances.

"Well," continued the enamored young pastor, "she is rather—in short, she has—well, on the whole, I think experience will correct her faults."

"What faults?" asked Mrs. Shepard.

"Why, in point of fact—you know she is young—well, I might perhaps say in fact——"

In fact, Mr. Nottingham was fairly cornered. He knew of no faults which Miss Maynard possessed. And after enjoying his confusion awhile, Mr. and Mrs. Shepard laughed heartily, in which Mr. Nottingham joined.

But the young clergyman's thoughts were not so thoroughly engrossed upon his intended, that he forgot to inquire about Mr. Shepard's experience as a teacher, and finally he made himself acquainted with all his brother's trials and perplexities; and before he left insisted upon lending Mr. Shepard fifty dollars, which he had laid by for his wedding tour, and which he should have no use for until six weeks from that time, when he should come to Dingle for his bride. After much hesitation Mr. Shepard accepted the loan, as his half year's pay would become due in four weeks.

The month flew quickly by, (though Mr. Nottingham would not by any means confirm the assertion,) and, two days before the day of payment,

Mr. Shepard, whose purse was reduced to the last dollar, called to remind the treasurer of the fact, in order that the salary might be paid promptly. But unfortunately Mr. Welton had that morning left for New York, for the purpose of purchasing goods, and was to be absent a week or ten days. Mr. Shepard felt heart-sick, for he had determined to return to Mr. Nottingham the sum so generously loaned by him, on the very day that his half year's salary became due ; and indeed he had intimated as much to his young brother. He hurried to his friend, Mr. Williams, to see if the money could not be collected, notwithstanding Mr. Welton's absence. Mr. Williams thought there could be no doubt of it ; and, as if in evidence of how easy a matter it would be to raise the amount, handed over to his pastor the due-bill of ten dollars, for the money he had already advanced, and two dollars and a half, being the balance of his own subscription for the half year. Mr. Shepard returned home, and, as usual, acquainted his wife with the state of affairs. But the good comforter soon quieted his apprehensions, by assuring him that it was useless to anticipate trouble ; that others would take it upon them to see him paid ; that, taking the worst possible view of the case, there would not be a delay of more than ten days, whereas he had a full fortnight before he would need the

fifty dollars. Mr. Shepard quieted his apprehensions ; at least he resolved to think no more upon the subject until pay-day came. On the morning of that day a servant knocked at the door, and left a fine fat fowl, accompanied by a note from Mr. Maynard, inclosing twelve dollars and a half, being one quarter of Mr. M.'s subscription ; for as Mr. M. had been but three months in the place, a half year's payment was not due from him. So Mr. Shepard had actually in his own possession fifteen dollars towards the fifty he was so anxious to raise. In the mean time, Mr. Welton, the treasurer, returns. The pastor goes to him and explains the case, tells him that in four days his friend, Mr. Nottingham, would be in town, and he could not meet him without having the money, and that he needed not only the sum he had borrowed, but all that was now due him. Mr. Welton has not the least hesitation in saying that the money will be forthcoming on the morrow without fail ; and hands him five dollars. Mr. Shepard returns home, not quite at ease, but endeavoring to comfort himself with the flattering delusion that to-morrow night he shall see the end of the present distress. Late in the afternoon of the following day, the pastor calls on Mr. Welton with as much unconcern as he can assume. Mr. Welton raises his head from his ledger with an "I declare !—I am

sorry you did not come before—I had forgotten you entirely. Sit down a moment, and I will get it for you.” And so saying, he takes his hat and leaves the store, while Mr. Shepard, endeavoring to look as pleasant as possible, sits down to a table in the rear of the store, and tries to interest himself in the last paper. He remains thus for half an hour, when Mr. Welton returns, saying, “I have done a little for you, but I think I can do better to-morrow,” and hands him three dollars. Mr. Shepard looks at the bill in despair, and says, “My good friend, I have placed myself in a very awkward position; my salary was due me nearly a fortnight ago, and I relied upon it to pay a debt, which, if not paid, will place my friend in most disagreeable circumstances.”

“Don’t say a word, Mr. Shepard,” said Mr. Welton; “I understand it perfectly. I have been negligent, and so have we all. But to-morrow morning I will give up my time entirely to this, and you shall be paid.”

Mr. Shepard bent his steps homeward, inwardly resolving that to-morrow he would be his own collector. Early the next morning, that morning which he hoped to have been able to spend uninterrupted in his study, he sallies forth to Mr. Welton, to remind him of his promise of the night before. Mr. Welton seems hurt to think that his

pastor could suppose him capable of forgetting his pledge, and starts off to rouse up some of the delinquents, while Mr. Shepard calls upon others. Mr. Shepard makes a poor collector ; for he feels that such is not his business, and he must talk a long time before he can make up his mind to *dun*. One person is out of funds that morning, another will have the amount in a day or two, and the third suggests to his pastor the propriety of borrowing, while a fourth thinks it really too bad, but can do nothing. The tears rise to the good man's eyes, but the money is not forthcoming. At noon he finds himself back again at the store of Mr. Welton, who is not quite as pleasant as he might be. But he has succeeded in raising five dollars for his pastor.

"But what shall I do?" asked Mr. Shepard.

"I am afraid," said Mr. Welton, "that you will have to borrow."

The minister said nothing, but the thought that was in his mind rose to his lips, that the party that owed him should borrow, and not compel him, for their own accommodation, to do what of all things he most disliked. He felt indignant, and as he walked homeward, thought seriously of calling the vestry together and offering his resignation. He tells his story to his wife, who, mild and patient as she is, cannot, on this occasion, quite

repress her feelings. The project of resigning is seriously discussed. But it is at length seen that the first business to be attended to is to raise the money that day needed ; and, with shame and vexation, mingled with heartfelt sorrow, Mr. Shepard at last perceives that while his congregation has for a fortnight been owing him upwards of one hundred dollars, he is compelled to submit to the humiliation of borrowing fifty. The morning has been one of disappointment and vexation. The afternoon must be one of mortification. With a faint heart, Mr. Shepard sets out on his errand. Mr. Jennings wants to know why he did not come before—could have let him have it just as well as not, but he had just paid out all, and is very sorry. Ditto two or three others. “It’s very hard times”—“money scarce”—“could have let you have it last week”—“if you will only wait a few days”—these are the pleasant and cheering remarks of the afternoon.

Reader, go and ask your pastor whether such trials are common among the clergy or not. Ask him, too, if oftentimes those who are wearing out their lives on a salary of four or five hundred dollars, do not doubly earn their wages by the anxiety they are compelled to endure before they actually obtain what is their due.

Onward pressed Mr. Shepard with the heroism

of a martyr on his way to the stake, when just as he was turning the corner, he heard a friendly voice saying, "Well, brother, why in such haste?" He turned and saw Mr. Nottingham. His face crimsoned. The man whom he really loved, but whom of all others he most dreaded to meet, stood before him.

"Come," said Mr. Nottingham, "I presume you are on your way home, and I will accompany you."

"Why, yes—no—I am going home," said Mr. Shepard, "but not immediately. If you will go to the house, Mrs. Shepard will be happy to see you, and I will follow you shortly."

Mr. Shepard's cup was now full. His friend's wedding was at hand, he was relying upon Mr. Shepard for the means of defraying his expenses, but that money was not yet raised, and there was no prospect of it. With a feeling of despair he went to Mr. Williams, and told his tale again. The heart of his parishioner was touched. "Go home," said he, "my dear sir, and give yourself no further uneasiness. I will not sleep to-night until the money is raised for you." Mr. Williams was as good as his word; for that evening, Mr. Shepard received, not the whole amount due him, but enough to enable him to pay the money he had borrowed.

That subject of anxiety disposed of, and Mr. Shepard had time to reflect upon the events of the past fortnight. He felt grieved, wounded, disheartened, and his feelings disposed him to think gloomily of his position and his labors. While thus meditating he was aroused by a knock at the door, and Mr. Abrams entered. Mr. Shepard welcomed him heartily, and was soon engaged in an interesting conversation. This Mr. Abrams had led a dissolute life. He was the head of an interesting family, and for the past year had been a frequent attendant at church. Mr. Shepard had conversed with Mrs. Abrams, but never with her husband. This man's errand now was to consult with Mr. Shepard in reference to his spiritual interests, and with a view to his own baptism and that of "all his house." The trials of that day were forgotten. There was a full remuneration for all the pastor had that day endured. Here was God's blessing upon the quiet and faithful use of the means of grace. Mr. Shepard felt that he had not labored in vain, and that night he retired to his bed with heartfelt gratitude to God, resolved thereafter to do more hopefully, and to endure more patiently, in the cause of his Divine Master.

CHAPTER XI.

More Variety.

THE marriage of young Mr. Nottingham at the church was performed with due solemnity. Two happier mortals than the bride and groom of that morning are not often to be found ; though all in similar circumstances are, or should be happy. The party of friends returned from the church to the house of the bride's father, where a plain repast was prepared, and the newly married couple received the congratulations of their friends. Mr. Nottingham's brideman handed Mr. Shepard, as a fee, a ten dollar gold coin. Mr. Shepard assured the bride that it was against his principles, and contrary to all laws of clerical etiquette, for a clergyman to receive a marriage fee from a brother in the ministry ; he therefore not only begged, but insisted, that she should accept the fee as a bridal gift. In spite of her remonstrances she was compelled to receive it. But before the carriage drove to the door to take the happy couple on their journey, she informed her father of what had taken place. When the party had dispersed, and Mr. Shepard

had returned to his home, he found on the table a polite note, stating that as he had had some scruples about receiving a fee from a brother clergyman, a happy father, who had that day gained a worthy son, hoped that Mr. Shepard would not refuse to accept a slight token of his regard. The note inclosed a check for fifty dollars, signed by Mr. Maynard. A gift to a clergyman never comes amiss ; but such gifts are generally doubly acceptable, because they are not like ordinary presents from friend to friend, but tokens of warm affection and gratitude.

Not many miles from Dingle was a small settlement which rejoiced in the euphonious name of Tinkertown. An iron ore bed had been discovered in the neighborhood, and some gentlemen of capital had erected a furnace, which formed the nucleus of a very small village. At this place Mr. Shepard was accustomed occasionally to hold an evening service. On one of these occasions, after the exercises of the evening were closed, he was desired to visit a sick person. Upon a bed, in the front room of a plain white cottage, was lying a working man of about thirty years, suffering from the effects of a violent fever. He was one of that class, by far too numerous, who, with partial training in youth, are left to run their chance of being converted at some future day.

Mr. Smith, the sick man, had been "converted" at a protracted meeting, though he had not united with any religious society ; but afterwards, being exposed to various untoward influences, had fallen back into his old sinful habits. But now, brought low by sickness, the remembrance of the past returned, and he had sent for the clergyman. Mr. Shepard, after making some inquiries, dwelt upon the sinfulness of his past life, and endeavored to show him the position in which he, as a transgressor, stood before God. He then pointed out the need of a Saviour, and exhorted the sick man to flee to Christ as his only refuge and hope in this hour. He then proceeded to show him what was required of those who were anxious to know what they should do to be saved—heartfelt repentance, a lively faith, steadfast purposes of amendment, evinced in immediate obedience, and an entire consecration to the service of God. Then speaking of the nature of the covenant relationship with God, by which we acquire a covenant title to the forgiveness of sins and the aid of the Holy Spirit, he showed the necessity of baptism. The invalid listened with the closest attention, and seemed deeply moved, and when Mr. Shepard had finished speaking he said :

"You have talked with me as I have never

been talked to before. You have explained what I never understood before. You have told me just what I needed to know. You have met my case exactly. And now, as I assure you of my heart-felt repentance, and my reliance upon Christ—yes, Christ alone for mercy, ‘here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?’ ”

Mr. Shepard replied, “I should feel at liberty to do so ; but you are not in immediate danger of death, and experience has already taught you the folly of relying upon your excited feelings. I think, therefore, that it would be a greater satisfaction to yourself to wait a few days, before receiving baptism. I will, God willing, come to see you on Monday evening next, and then if you continue steadfast, I will most cheerfully baptize you. In the mean time, should you grow worse, send for me, and I will come at any moment.”

The sick man and his wife agreed that such a course would be preferable, and after offering up a prayer, and receiving the warmest thanks of Mr. and Mrs. Smith, Mr. Shepard returned to Dingle.

This was on Wednesday evening. It rained incessantly for a few days, and on Monday the roads were almost impassable. But Mr. Shepard, true to his promise, hired a horse and wagon and rode five miles through the rain and mud to Tin-

kertown. On arriving at Mr. Smith's, Mr. Shepard found the sick man somewhat better, but neither the husband nor wife received him as cordially as he had reason to expect. Mr. Shepard could not but notice this; however, he made no inquiries as to the cause, and after a few general remarks, proceeded to converse with the invalid in reference to his immortal interests. But Mr. Smith cut him short with a few questions.

"You preach in a black gown, don't you?"

"Yes, sir," replied Mr. Shepard with some surprise.

"With white things hanging down from your neck?"

Mr. Shepard assented.

"You read your prayers out of a book, don't you?"

"Yes."

"And you believe that when a man is made a minister, one of them bishops, such as the Roman Catholics have, must put his hands upon his head?"

"I believe in ordination by Bishops," was Mr. Shepard's reply.

"And when you baptize a person," continued Mr. Smith, "you make the sign of the cross on his forehead, don't you?"

"I do."

"There," said Mr. Smith, turning to his wife, "you see it's all just as that man said it was. Now, sir," he continued, turning to Mr. Shepard, "you didn't tell me any of these things when you were here before. I don't believe in them. I ain't a going to have any cross made on my forehead, nor any book praying, nor any other kind of Popish mummary around me, now I tell you."

Mr. Shepard, with a little warmth in his manner, said : "When I came to see you last Wednesday evening, it was not to teach you about forms of prayer, or clerical garments, or Apostolical succession, or the propriety of the sign of the cross in baptism—this was not my errand. I came as a minister of Jesus Christ, to point out the way of salvation to a sinner apparently on the brink of the grave. Were you well, with enough of time, and in a fit state of mind to talk about the claims of the Episcopal Church, I could show you that that Church *has* claims which are not to be despised. But, important as these things are in their place, you have not the time to consider them now. Your business is to prepare your soul for judgment, where you must shortly appear ; and all I have had to say to you thus far has been upon what to you, under your circumstances, was actually necessary to salvation. Now, whoever has been to see you since

my visit, if he really loved your soul, would not have sought to disturb your mind with questions which are of no importance to you *now*. He would have followed up my instructions and my exhortations, and sought to strengthen your faith and deepen your repentance ; these, not questions upon which Christians differ, are your concern now, and all that you have time to attend to. I left you last Wednesday evening in a very proper state of mind. You did not ask me then who and what I was, and you told me that I had given you such instruction as you most needed, and taught you your duty in a manner more plain and forcible than you had ever heard it before. And now you forget all that, and because my manner of praying and dressing, or the ceremonies of the Church to which I belong, are different from what you have been accustomed to, you refuse to enter into covenant with God by baptism. I have put myself to great inconvenience to come here to-night to baptize you. I find you not in a proper state of mind to receive that sacrament ; and now I leave you, hoping that what I have said will bring you to reflection. And when you shall have come to a better mind, send me word and I will come to you."

Mr. Shepard's remarks seemed to have some effect upon Mrs. Smith, but the husband was ap-

parently unmoved by them. The fact was, that a travelling preacher had officiated in Tinkertown the previous evening, and having heard of Mr. Shepard's visit, took the liberty to call on the sick man ; and though he conversed on spiritual subjects, took occasion to prejudice his mind against Episcopacy and Episcopalians. Mr. Shepard returned to his home meditating upon the question, whether the charge of sectarianism should be applied exclusively to Episcopalians or not ; and whether that was a justifiable zeal against any body of Christians which would not scruple to sacrifice a *soul* in its bitterness against—not doctrines, but *forms*. The sick man continued better for a few days, and then his disease taking an unfavorable turn, he died suddenly. And here was a soul ushered into the presence of God without the "washing of regeneration," which is necessary to salvation, where it may be had ; for it must never be forgotten that the promise of the Saviour is, "He that believeth *and is baptized* shall be saved."

Mr. Shepard was sitting one morning alone in his study, which was in a wing of the house occupied as his residence. A faint knock was heard at the door, and the tall, slender form of Mrs. Artman entered. She was pale, and her look was careworn, but her features had assumed a

Forced composure, and Mr. Shepard, surprised at seeing her at all, could not but read in her manner and countenance that no ordinary errand had sent her to him that day. He received her with that politeness which was usual with him, and passing the compliments of the day, endeavored to make himself and his visitor as much at ease as possible. After a few apologies for interrupting Mr. Shepard, and some general remarks, Mrs. Artman proceeded to state her errand.

"You know, sir," said she, "that it was my choice to be a member of your congregation."

Mr. Shepard replied that he had been led to suppose that that was the case.

"My mother," she continued, "was a devout communicant of the Episcopal Church, as my father, who died when I was too young to know him, had also been. My early training was not neglected, and I was confirmed by Bishop Seabury, two years before my mother died. My sorrows only led me to seek more earnestly that consolation which is to be found in the religion of the Gospel. My Bible, my Church, and my Prayer Book furnished me the solace I needed. At eighteen I married, and I hoped, and then firmly believed, that the man whom I had chosen would sympathize with my views and feelings. And indeed he did for some time accompany me regu-

larly to church, and allow me to have evening prayers at home. But he was a man of business. He gave himself wholly to the pursuit of wealth, and soon cared less and less for his spiritual welfare. I had hoped that the death of our first child, a daughter of whom he was devotedly fond, would have been the means of recalling him to his duty. But the check he thus received was only temporary in its effects. He was soon as deeply engaged as ever in his projects for money making. When my son James was an infant"—and here her voice trembled—"I had him baptized. We removed to this part of the country when it was new, and you know how successful my husband has been in his business. I endeavored to do my duty by my boy. I prayed for him and with him, and instructed him in his duties as a Christian, as the Church teaches us to do. His father was bent upon giving him a good education, and made the mistake of sending him too early from his mother's care, to endure the temptations of a boarding school in a distant place. My boy became wild and thoughtless. But let me tell you," and here, while the tears stood in her eyes, she spoke with a clear, strong voice,—“let me tell you, Mr. Shepard, the fervent prayers of a mother over her child will not be unanswered. God tells us to bring up our children in His fear. That command

I have obeyed to the utmost of my power, and I *know* that a blessing is in store for me yet. When the new church was in process here, it was to gratify my husband that I refrained from taking a more active part in the enterprise. I believed at the time that it was my influence that induced Mr. Artman to favor it, and I hoped that I had again found a home in the Church I loved. The unfortunate affair with Mr. Brown caused my husband to request me to remain away from the church. You know that before this occurrence my husband and Mr. Brown had some misunderstandings. Situated as I was, I believed Mr. Brown to be guilty ; and one of my greatest trials has been that my son has been suspected of being a criminal. Mr. Shepard, you are a father. How could you endure the thought that a son of yours should be suspected of committing such a crime ?”

Mr. Shepard shook his head, but was silent.

“Mr. Shepard !” continued Mrs. Artman in a more subdued tone, “how would you feel if you yourself began to *suspect* that your own son were the criminal that some have believed my boy to be ?”

The pastor was deeply moved, but still made no reply. Mrs. Artman sank back in the chair, and wringing her hands wept bitterly.

“Whatever trial God may be pleased to send,”

she said at length, "I trust I may be able to bear it. But this one affliction he has spared me—that my son should be *brought to trial* and *proved* guilty. Oh ! I could not, I could not endure that, and God does not ask it of me. Yes, I am spared that trial."

Mr. Shepard was about to speak, but she interrupted him.

"My son returned home late last night, and my object in calling to see you is to ask you, at his request, to come and see him, for he is very low."

Mr. Shepard accompanied the afflicted mother, and in a few moments he stood beside the bed of James Artman.

CHAPTER XII.

A Penitent.

MR. ARTMAN had been called away from home on business ; but daily expecting the return of his son, had left injunctions to have a messenger sent for him in case James should arrive during his absence. Accordingly, no sooner had the stage driven to the door, than a man was dispatched with all speed for the father.

In our last chapter we left Mr. Shepard at the bedside of James Artman. He was wasted and pale, his breathing was quick and obstructed, and his eyes wandered restlessly about the room. Consumption, with frequent attacks of bleeding at the lungs, had brought him to this state. When the pastor entered he turned his head from him, and sought to hide his face in the pillow. Mr. Shepard drew his chair by the bedside, and began to address the invalid upon the subject of his present state.

"I know it all—all," whispered the youth, "but wait. Now, mother ;" and Mrs. Artman, as if understanding his wishes, drew up a stand upon which were writing materials, and placed it

by Mr. Shepard's side. She then seated herself upon the foot of the bed, and leaning against the bed-post, with her hands clasped and her lips pressed closely together, with a forced composure, waited to hear the dying confession of her son.

"Please write as I tell you," said James ; and Mr. Shepard, with as firm a hand as he could command, prepared to obey the request.

"I, James Artman, upon my dying bed, and appealing to that God in whose presence I am shortly to appear, solemnly declare that I forged the check for which Mr. Brown was imprisoned."

Mr. Shepard, with a trembling hand, and face bent downward, for he dare not look upon the mother, traced the words as they had been uttered.

"Is it down?" asked James.

"Yes," said Mr. Shepard, and read what he had written.

"Right !" said James, "and now please go on." He then proceeded to state the particulars of the transaction,—how he was persuaded to it by Mr. Gliding,—how he had induced the workmen to believe that he was in a room in the mill on the evening in question,—how further, at the instigation of his vicious companion, he had altered books and papers belonging to his father, which were in Mr. Brown's handwriting, so as to create a suspicion of that good man's dishonesty.

Through the whole, with the exception of a slight quivering of the lips, Mrs. Artman sat like a statue. She was fully prepared for such a scene as this, and though she knew not all the details of her son's wickedness, yet she had imagined that the one act of forgery could not be his only crime.

When the sick man had finished, Mr. Shepard read the confession aloud, and by placing a portfolio upon the bed, young Artman was enabled to sign it. The pastor then told Mrs. Artman that there was now no time to be lost in doing justice to the injured ; and suggested that, in order that this paper might not fail of its object, it would be well to have witnesses, before whom her son should acknowledge his signature. A servant was accordingly dispatched for Mr. Williams and Mr. Sismond, the nearest neighbors. While waiting for these, Mr. Shepard employed himself in conversing with the young man in reference to his present position before God. He did not begin by holding out the hope of mercy, but by such remarks as might lead the invalid to repentance.

"I know it all,—I know it all," said the young man ; "I do not deserve mercy, and as yet I have not expected it. But, Mr. Shepard, mine is not a death-bed repentance. Mother, if it will be

any relief to you to know it, let me tell you that months ago, when I was not sick as I am now, and had no thoughts of dying so soon, I committed my confession to writing,—I would not risk it by mail. I engaged a passage by the first vessel returning home, resolved to deliver myself up to justice. But I was taken sick, and the vessel left me at Liverpool. As I got better, an Englishman whose acquaintance I had formed, and who was kind to me, told me that in my sleep I had said much about home, the Church, and the clergyman at Dingle, and had confessed myself a criminal. I then told him all, showed him my written confession, which I committed to his hands, but begged him not to disclose it, as I wished to bear it personally to America, and to deliver myself up to justice. He accompanied me as far as New York. No, I am not a death-bed penitent. When I was well, and had the prospect of life before me, I thought of the sufferings I had caused a most estimable man and his lovely family. I remembered what my mother taught me when I was a child, and——”

At that moment, Mrs. Artman, who had up to this time, with an effort which she could not conceal, retained her composure, gave way to her feelings. She threw herself upon the bed, and sobbing aloud, bathed her son with her tears.

"I might have known it !" said she ; " God be praised ! my poor guilty, guilty son is penitent, and there is mercy for him. Oh, I can endure all the disgrace, now, for it was not the fear of death, but God's own blessed grace, sent in answer to a mother's prayers, that drove my son to repentance. There is mercy, there is pardon ; your Saviour has died to secure it for you, my son !"

This recital of course placed Mr. James Artman in a position entirely different from what Mr. Shepard had supposed ; and he could now confidently urge him to look to the Saviour for pardon. As Mr. Shepard was proceeding to improve the opportunity now offered him, the servant announced the arrival of Mr. Williams and Mr. Sismond. They entered, and the clergyman began to explain to them the purpose for which they were wanted, viz., to be witnesses that James Artman, Jr., declared this to be his signature.

"Yes," said the young man, "and that they may be assured that I know what I have signed, first read the paper."

While Mr. Shepard was complying with the request, carriage wheels were heard at the door, and in a moment Mr. Artman burst into the room and flew to the bed of his son. There was

silence in that room, save only when interrupted by the sobs of father and son. Mr. Artman would lean back and gaze upon the pallid countenance of his boy, and then again fall upon him and weep aloud. After a few moments he raised himself from the bed, and seemed for the first time to notice the presence of the company. He looked surprised, and then turning to his wife, asked :

“What has happened? Is he dying?” As no reply was made, he asked, “What are these gentlemen here for?”

“I sent for them, father,” said the son, in a faint voice.

Mr. Artman looked bewildered, but no one seemed disposed to venture to give an explanation. At length Mr. Shepard said, “Your son sent for me, and being near his end, he had an important communication to make, which I have taken down from his own lips; and just as you entered, these gentlemen arrived to witness that he signed it.”

“But what does it mean?” asked the astonished father.

“It is a most painful matter,” said Mr. Shepard, “but you should know it: your son made his confession.”

“His confession!” exclaimed Mr. Artman.

Mr. Shepard made no reply, but handed him the paper. Mr. Artman glanced eagerly over the page, then fixed an earnest gaze upon his boy. There was a conflict in that man's heart. There lay his loved son, evidently at the very gates of death. Here was a document which would exhibit that son to the world as a base criminal, heap disgrace upon the family, release from prison a man whom Mr. Artman hated, and cast suspicion upon his own former conduct towards Mr. Brown. All these thoughts flashed across Mr. Artman's mind, and his look and manner betrayed his agitation. He paced the room, swinging his arms and beating his forehead, then stopping by the bedside, would smooth with his hand the sick man's brow, and burst into tears. At length he sat down, the paper still in his hand, and then placing the other hand over his eyes, leaned forward, and his whole frame shook with deep emotion. The conflict was long, but it ended at length, and Mr. Artman rose, and in a calm but very sad tone, said :

"Gentlemen, my son has been on a long voyage ; he has returned home when he was not able to bear the journey ; he is, as you perceive, much excited, and not in a proper state of mind to make a statement of so great importance as this. Slanders had been circulated about him before he

left home ; he was suspected ; and because people suspected and *falsely* accused him, he went to sea. It preyed upon his mind, and now, in the *delirium* of disease, the poor boy believes himself the guilty one."

"Father ! father !" exclaimed the young man, "I am *not* wild. I know what I have said ; it is true, every word, and I came home to make my confession."

"Be calm my boy, be calm," said Mr. Artman, "it shall all be as you wish. Gentlemen, I cannot consent that such a paper as this should go forth to the world while my son is in such a state of mind. When he gets better, as no doubt under skilful medical treatment he will, if then he makes such a statement, I can assure you that I shall not be backward in doing justice. But he is evidently not in a fit condition to—"

"Father !" almost shrieked the youth, "I can't live, I feel it. I tell you this is my dying confession. I am the guilty one, not Mr. Brown. If you have any feeling for your son, do not refuse my dying request. Gentlemen, that is my signature—I acknowledge it—sign the paper !"

"Poor boy ! how he raves !" said the inhuman father ; "you see for yourselves how it is."

"Mr. Artman," said Mr. Shepard, "you are hastening your son's death. He cannot endure

this excitement. It will bring on his hemorrhage. I know it is painful, humiliating, but justice must be done. This is not the place to argue this question. Let these gentlemen sign it as your son wishes ; or give me the paper as it is."

"My husband," exclaimed Mrs. Artman, throwing her arms around him and weeping bitterly, "do not add this to all my sorrows. I feel the affliction more deeply than you can do. Our son has committed a crime ; God has given him repentance ; and now, while on his death-bed, do not prevent our boy from making the only amends in his power. I beg, I implore you, do not."

"This is all folly, and worse !" said Mr. Artman, growing angry. "I tell you his disease has influenced his mind ! It is all a delusion, and you, sir !" turning to Mr. Shepard, "you wolf in sheep's clothing, have tampered with this woman and helped on the delusion !—you have aimed to bring disgrace upon me and my family, all to get a canting hypocrite out of prison, where he is suffering what he justly deserves ! But I tell you, sir, and you, you scoundrels, that you shall be foiled !"

And so saying, he stepped forward to the fireplace, and in an instant the confession was in the flames. The party made a simultaneous rush to snatch the paper from destruction, but the strong arm of Mr. Artman prevented them. He held

them back until they saw the dying confession of the penitent consumed. Before they could fairly récover from their astonishment, they were aroused by a violent cough from the bed. They turned, and the blood was flowing freely from the mouth and nostrils of the invalid. The violent excitement had done its work. He gasped and struggled, and fell back a corpse.

CHAPTER VIII.

A Welcome.

THE three gentlemen, Mr. Shepard, Mr. Williams and Mr. Sismond, left the house of Mr. Artman, and at once proceeded towards the office of Mr. Lawton, the village magistrate. On their way they providentially met Mr. Johnson, Mr. Brown's partner, and briefly stated the occurrences which had transpired. He volunteered to leave everything and be ready to start at once for the purpose of laying their testimony before the Governor. It was necessary for them to proceed with caution and secrecy, lest it should become noised abroad through the village, and some indiscreet person should break the intelligence to Mrs. Brown too suddenly. They accordingly stopped at the office of Mr. Williams, and spent some time in deliberation. Arrived at the magistrate's, they were informed that Mr. Lawton had gone out some half an hour before, in company with Mr. Rekle. They did not however wait long before Mr. Lawton entered, and they proceeded at once to make a statement of the events of the morning, to the truth of which they took their oaths. Mr.

Lawton then drew up a petition to the Governor for the pardon of Mr. Brown. As he signed the papers, he said, "Gentlemen, I wish you success with all my heart ; but I have just administered an oath to Mr. Artman, and Mr. Rekle is now on his way with an affidavit to the Governor."

The three gentlemen were astounded, and saw that no time was to be lost. They hurried at once to the residence of Mr. Johnson, whom they found waiting their arrival ; his carriage was at the door, and he was bidding adieu to his family. Just as he was mounting the carriage steps they saw Mr. Lawton's clerk in the distance, beckoning and running towards them with all speed. On coming up, he begged them to delay but for a moment. And soon Mr. Lawton himself came walking rapidly up to the door in company with a stranger. "Now gentlemen," said the magistrate, "the few moments, delay which I shall cause you will not impede your progress in the least. Allow me to introduce you to Mr. Barget, from Liverpool. And now, as no time is to be lost, we will proceed to business. I hold in my hand a document addressed to myself, which this gentleman has brought me. It is signed and sealed by James Artman. And with Mr. Johnson's permission we will enter here, and as Mr. Barget relates how he came by the document, I will write down the nar-

rative, and I think that with all these papers before him the Governor will not long hesitate."

They entered the house, and Mr. Barget stated that young Mr. Artman, having landed at Liverpool, and taken lodgings at the same house where Mr. Barget was boarding, and being a stranger in a foreign land, he had taken an interest in him, and attended him constantly during his sickness. While in a high fever, Mr. Artman had talked in a manner which convinced Mr. Barget that he had, while in America, committed a crime, and caused an innocent person to suffer the penalty which he himself justly deserved. As Artman recovered, Mr. Barget told him of the disclosures which he had made during his delirium. The young man frankly confessed the whole, related minutely every incident, and handed Mr. Barget this document, which was his confession, made some weeks before while at sea, and while there was no immediate prospect of sickness or death. He also assured Mr. Barget that it was his purpose to return as soon as possible and deliver himself up to justice. During his sickness, the vessel in which young Artman was to have gone to America, sailed from port, and bore an anonymous letter from Mr. Barget to Mr. Shepard. Mr. Shepard here produced the letter, and it was attached to the other papers. Mr. Barget was

sent out as an agent for a mercantile house, and came in the same vessel with James Artman. Perceiving while on the voyage that the young man could not long survive, and fearing that he might not live to reach home, Mr. Barget arranged his business so as to come on to Dingle by the next stage, and lay this confession before a magistrate in case the criminal should be unable to do so himself.

This statement, being signed and sworn to by Barget, was placed in the hands of Mr. Johnson, who immediately departed on his way to the capital, bearing with him the prayers of the friends of the afflicted. And now, as nothing more could be done until the Governor should be heard from, Mr. Shepard saw the necessity of at once breaking the intelligence to Mrs. Brown. To keep such a matter secret until the return of Mr. Johnson would be impossible ; and indeed, rumors of the events of the morning were already afloat through the village. The pastor accordingly, taking Mr. Barget with him, proceeded to the residence of the afflicted wife and daughter.

The mother was engaged in her household duties, and Mary, whose health had improved, was sitting in an easy chair by the window. The clergyman introduced his companion, and was soon engaged in conversation. But such a conver-

sation Mr. Shepard found it difficult to conduct. Several times he approached the subject, and then, as Mrs. Brown would lead him on, he would fear to break the intelligence, and then start off upon some other topic. Mrs. Brown noticed his embarrassment, and was not slow to conjecture the cause. At length, drawing her chair near her pastor, she fixed her eyes full upon him and said :

“ Mr. Shepard, I have seen some heavy trials ; and the discipline which I have undergone has taught me, I trust, to be able to hear any intelligence without giving way to my feelings. So do not hesitate to tell me at once what you have to say. Have you any information in reference to my husband ?”

Mr. Shepard hesitated for a moment, but the calm look of Mrs. Brown reassured him, and he proceeded to give an account of the anonymous letter, which he had received some weeks before, and stated the fact to her. He then related briefly all the events of the morning, and Mrs. Brown and her daughter heard him through without interruption.

Shall I attempt to describe the scene ?—the tears, the embraces, the ejaculations of praise, of the mother and daughter ?—their thanks to the young stranger, who had so disinterestedly, and from pure generosity of heart, sought their

welfare ? There was light in that dwelling now. And if it requires Christian fortitude to bear up under trials, it requires grace also to hear sudden tidings of joy. In the midst of this scene, Master John burst into the room, and flew to his mother's arms, saying :

"Mother, father will be free, now. James Artman has died and confessed himself the criminal."

It was a happy scene, but one almost too exciting for an invalid to bear. Mr. Shepard and his friend soon withdrew, deeming it better to leave the family for a while to themselves. They wended their way, arm in arm, together, back to the village, Mr. Barget accepting an invitation to dine with the clergyman. It was a late dinner for a country village, but the exciting scenes through which they had passed did not contribute to increase their appetites. Mr. Shepard found his guest a noble specimen of a true Englishman. He had received an excellent education, and was a devout and intelligent member of the Church of England. He had a small fortune, and was now interested in a mercantile house in Liverpool, and, acting as agent, had come to this country, but his business was of such a nature as to give him a few months' leisure, which, after seeing justice done to the Brown family, he intended to improve in travelling through the States and Canada. Mr.

Shepard insisted upon having Mr. Barget make the parsonage his home during his stay at Dingle. But Mr. Barget could not be prevailed upon to accept the invitation. He took rooms at the village hotel, and awaited the return of news from the capital. And now Dingle Parish was again a scene of excitement. The tidings of young Artman's death and confession spread through the village, and groups might be seen on almost every corner, repeating and discussing the news. All were excited, all were hopeful, all felt assured that Mr. Brown would soon return and resume his place as the most worthy and the most beloved of the citizens of Dingle. These hopes, the rumors of young Artman's mind being disordered at the time of his death did not crush ; for here was the worthy young Englishman to bear witness to a confession made at a time when the mental faculties were clear.

In the mean time preparations were made for the funeral of James Artman. The father insisted upon calling the Presbyterian clergyman to officiate, but the mother entreated to have the burial service of the Church read over the grave of her son. But the father would not consent to call upon Mr. Shepard. But by the timely return of Mr. Nottingham, the matter was compromised, and he conducted the services at the funeral.

The whole village attended, for it was an occasion of no ordinary interest. The body was duly committed to the ground, "earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust." The hard stern father was calm ; but it was the calmness of rigid nerve and muscle, whose movements avarice had controlled for years. The mother was calm also ; but it was the composure of one who, though her heart was pierced by the keenest sorrows a mother can know, seemed to be listening to the music of angels above, as they swept their harps joyfully over a sinner turned to God.

Days passed away, days of suspense and confident hope, but still no tidings from the capital. At length, one evening at dusk, Mr. Rekle was seen driving through the village, and he stopped at the door of the mill. He entered the office, the door was closed, and he remained closeted with Mr. Artman for more than an hour. At length Mr. Rekle pursued his way homeward. The news of his arrival had spread through the village, and all who met him stopped to learn what tidings he brought from the Governor. But to all inquiries Mr. Rekle gave no satisfactory answer. His only reply was, "Wait till you hear from his excellency himself." The inhabitants of Dingle must therefore wait until the return of Mr. Johnson. But that night no Mr. Johnson came, nor the next

day, nor the day following. The excitement of the villagers was now intense. Nothing could be learned either from Mr. Artman or Mr. Rekle, and Mr. Johnson had not written a syllable to his family since he left home. It was not even known positively whether he had reached the capital or not. At length it began to be suspected that either accident or something worse had befallen him.

But this suspense was not to be of long duration. Mr. Johnson at length arrived at his own door ; but before he could enter the house, several, who had long been watching for him, ran to the carriage and eagerly asked what tidings he brought from the Governor. Mr. Johnson ascended the steps of his dwelling and said : " Gentlemen, Mr. Brown is pardoned ; and I have delayed my return until this time that I might bring him home. He is now safe with his family."

There was an outburst of feeling then which will long be remembered in Dingle. There were shoutings, throwing up of hats, cheers for the Governor, cheers for Johnson, cheers for the young Englishman, cheers for Brown, and the company scattered in every direction, carrying the good tidings of Mr. Brown's pardon and return. For the last twelve hours the inhabitants had been

wrought up to a high pitch of excitement, which was made more intense by Mr. Johnson's delay. And now it seemed as though they knew not how to control their joy. The church bells rang a merry peal, and as evening drew on bonfires were lighted, the shop windows illuminated, and soon the Dingle band of musicians were out, and a large concourse of citizens assembled on the village green. Mr. Johnson was called for, and a self-constituted committee of some half dozen proceeded to his residence, and brought him to the green. "Tell us all about it!" cried a score of voices. And Mr. Johuson, ascending the meeting house steps, gave an account of his interview with the Governor, his proceeding to the prison for Mr. Brown, and his journey home. When he finished the narrative, the crowd gave a terrific "three times three." Mr. Sismond, taking advantage of the first calm, mounted the fence and shouted :

"Mr. Johnson ! you are a fine fellow, and I have long had my eye on you. If you are up for any office, from constable to congressman, you may rely on my countenance and support."

This speech, so perfectly characteristic of the man who made it, was received with a universal shout of laughter, and a hearty three cheers for Sismond. And from that day forward, his favor-

ite expression, "my countenance and support," was a by-word in Dingle.

The crowd then moved on, the band, preceded by torches, leading the way towards Mr. Brown's. It was feared by some that this well meant demonstration might be too much for the family just at this time ; but they concluded to go up and assure their liberated friend of their joy at his return. They marched in order, the band playing a lively air. Arrived at the cottage, Mr. Lawton, the magistrate, on behalf of the citizens, called Mr. Brown to the door, and in a brief speech welcomed him back to his home. Mr. Brown could hardly speak, for he had passed years in almost entire silence, and he was not in a fit state to address a crowd. He came to the steps, however,—where he was received with repeated cheers,—bowed to the concourse, and requested Mr. Lawton to express to his fellow citizens his thanks, which he felt unable to do. The band again struck up, and led the way back to the village green, where the assembly quietly dispersed.

CHAPTER XIV.

Conclusion.

IN this rapidly growing country, in this rapidly progressing age, what changes take place in the short space of fifteen years ! Dingle is not an exception. More than fifteen years have elapsed since the events mentioned in the last chapter transpired. In my first chapter I described Dingle as it was some twenty years ago. A railroad passes through the place now. It is a larger and more thriving village than it was, but it is not yet the city which some sanguine ones prophesied it would be. I, like most of my brethren, have during that time changed my residence, and am Rector of another parish. Then I was but little more than an hour's ride from Dingle—now I am just an hour from that place, though then I lived twelve, and now I live forty miles distant. My hair is thinner and whiter than it was, and I count more wrinkles now than then ; but still, by God's blessing, my health is firm, and my heart is still young.

It was the fifteenth anniversary of Mr. Brown's return ; and I was invited with my wife to spend

the day with my old friends at Dingle. The cars bore us speedily to our destination, and we were welcomed as only Mr. Brown could welcome us, at his residence, which is neither more nor less than what was once the spacious mansion of Mr. Artman. That man is in his grave now ; he died neither poor nor penitent, but suddenly ; and the settlement of his estate found him to be less wealthy than had been supposed. The mill also had passed into the hands of Mr. Brown ; and the house where the latter lived—not the low cottage among the trees by the main road, but the neat white house which he changed for his prison walls—is now occupied by the widow Artman. There she lives the life of a saint. But hers is not the piety of the hermit and the ascetic. She has retired from the world in all respects, save wherein by contact with it she may, like her Divine Master, be the means of scattering blessings. The parish school, which she daily visits, was founded, and is almost wholly maintained, by the munificence of Mrs. Artman. Every day some poor or afflicted person is cheered or consoled by her. Her life is literally consecrated to God, and her name will be remembered, and her example felt, long after she shall have been laid down by the graves of her husband and son.

It was a happy day at Dingle, and Mr. Brown

—now grown older, and his countenance wearing an expression of sadness which years of imprisonment had given him, and which subsequent prosperity and happiness had not wholly dispelled—but still cheerful, with a heart overflowing with devout gratitude to God for special mercies, looked round upon the happy assembly, feeling that he had reason to be the happiest of them all. For besides the warm and long tried friends who that day met around his board, there had been new relationships formed, and new members added to his household. There sat upon his knees two grandchildren—a bright little boy and girl, the offspring of his daughter Mary, whose husband, Mr. Barget, was now a New York merchant, a partner of the Liverpool house, as agent of which he had come to this country fifteen years before. Yes, it was even so. The noble hearted young Englishman, who had taken such a lively interest in an afflicted family three thousand miles from his home, had found in that family a wife well worthy of him.

There, too, was another happy family: Mr. and Mrs. Maynard, with their daughter and son-in-law, Mrs. and the Rev. Mr. Nottingham, whose three children were also present on the occasion. Whether Mrs. Nottingham ever had any faults or not, Mrs. Shepard was never able to learn;

though, as formerly, her husband insisted that he was by no means blind to her failings, yet what the failings were the public did not know, and Mr. Nottingham seemed at a loss to point out. The worthy couple were beloved in their parish, where they lived happily, doing their part towards building up the kingdom of Christ, and leading souls to heaven.

But there were some absentees. Mrs. Brown was not present at the time of which I am speaking, nor John. Nor would the party be complete without the presence of Mr. Shepard and his family. But my readers will say, of course Mr. Shepard could not be there, for within fifteen years his name must have several times appeared in the Church papers, under the head of "clerical changes." But here my readers are mistaken. Dingle Parish, like most parishes, might, under ordinary circumstances, have been fond of change ; but in the case of Mr. Shepard, like an old couple who had long "lived and loved together," neither were anxious to sever the old and form new ties ; for events had transpired in Dingle which made pastor and flock mutually dear to each other, and Mr. Maynard and Mr. Brown, now the wealthiest citizens of Dingle, had joined with Mrs. Artman in so providing for their Rector's temporal welfare that his spiritual labors were not impeded by the

cares and harassing anxieties and vexations in reference to his own support, which embitter the life of most of the clergy.

Dingle Parish is in the full tide of prosperity, now. Its church bell—not on the Lord's day, only—calls to prayer a devout, an exemplary, a *working* congregation. They go to hear a faithful servant of the Lord, who neither finds time nor sees the necessity for explaining to them the *distinctive principles* on which he stands, or which are professed by the *party* to which he belongs. Like the liturgy in which they join, the sermons to which they listen are expositions of doctrines which Apostles and martyrs believed and taught, and the lessons enforced are the same which saints in all ages have practiced. The denominations around have their seasons of fervor and coldness, and it is but speaking truth to say, that new ideas and new measures sometimes appear among them to create turmoil, and drive to the bosom of the Church those who love peace and long for “the old paths.” But their affairs are not the affairs of St. James' Church in Dingle. Mr. Shepard lets them alone, and they have long since found it policy to let him alone. He neither assails nor denounces, nor moves a hand in reference to them, except it be for the purpose of warding off the casual blows which may be aimed at the Church.

He is well learned in controversial theology, but his principle is, let the Church rather seek first to win the hearts of earnest-minded men, and she will find them prepared to examine for themselves, and listen candidly to her arguments. And thus in a remote country village, where the din of city life is never heard, the Church is quietly doing her work, and when the present laborers shall be gone, and perhaps even their names forgotten, their influence shall be felt on hearts yet unborn, and the good deeds they have done shall be remembered in heaven, when pastor and flock shall together hear the sentence, "Well done, good and faithful, enter ye into the joy of your Lord."

But we are wandering from our narrative. Where were the missing ones all this while? Carriages drove up to the door, and the company, leaving the little ones in the care of nurses, seated themselves in the vehicles, and were conveyed to the tidy parsonage adjoining the church, where they alighted and separated. I went to the vestry room. Mr. Maynard and his household, with my wife, entered the church, where a large congregation had assembled. Mr. Brown and his family entered the parsonage. In a few moments I stood within the chancel, clothed in the surplice. A few moments more, and a bride and bridegroom walked up the aisle, accompanied by a few young

friends, and followed by Mr. Shepard and his wife and the Brown family. And yet a few moments more, and I had said the marriage service, and the Rev. John Brown and Mary Shepard were man and wife. Hearty were the greetings on that occasion. I had known them and loved them from their early childhood. To him who was now the bridegroom, I had been almost a father while his own parent was in prison ; and I had been present and joined in the laying on of hands when he had been made Deacon and Presbyter ; and now, young though he was, he was my successor in the parish of which I had formerly held the charge in the neighborhood of Dingle. The friends, after leaving the church, assembled at the parsonage, where was spent a pleasant two hours ; for all were happy, and well they might be ; the daughter of a beloved pastor was married to the son of him who had been the founder of the parish, and thus were united two families whom the whole congregation devotedly loved. But dinner was waiting at Mr. Brown's, and as soon as the party dispersed, we, with the addition of Mrs. Brown, Mr. and Mrs. Shepard, and the happy pair, were driven to Mr. Brown's.

On our way we passed a well built but not very tasty residence,—which, as you look at, you are convinced that the owner must have had money,

and yet if you look closer you involuntarily say to yourself, "Two shillings saved here—there he saved a sixpence—there a whole dollar—sacrificing, not beauty merely, but convenience and comfort to an economy which looks like stinginess"—in such a house lives Mr. Rekle. If it was his ambition to amass a snug little property, he has succeeded; if to become a prominent and respected citizen, he has been disappointed. Few persons are more valued than a high minded lawyer, none more despised than one of that class who takes advantage of the opportunities which his business affords him to speculate out of the embarrassments of the unfortunate; who is ready to help forward any scheme of extortion which will yield him a fair profit; on whom any man can call when he desires to have dirty work done which he is ashamed to do himself: such a man is Mr. Rekle, and such is his reputation. But I am happy to say that his wife, though she suffers by her husband's reputation, is regarded by those who know her as a woman of whom her partner is unworthy, and who in another station would be generally beloved.

Nor must I omit to call attention to that gay, flashy house, opposite, built on a small scale indeed, but with some pretensions to style. It is owned and occupied by Mr. Sismond, a man who

has but one enemy in Dingle, and that enemy is himself. He is liked by those who know him, and his vanity, which displays itself in a kind of mock dignity, causing him to act as though he thought the earth the centre of the universe, Dingle the centre of the earth, and himself the centre of Dingle,—this, as it is harmless to all save himself, one soon ceases to notice, for he is an upright and worthy man, and though sometimes ridiculed, he is generally esteemed. His small fortune has somewhat increased in bulk, and he feels it. His wife is a worthy communicant of the Church, and he and his family are now constant attendants.

But we arrive at the residence of Mr. Brown, where the happy family party are assembled, and as we see there the man and his family whom God has tried in the furnace of affliction, and who for years seemed doomed to trials which happily few are called to endure—their children and grandchildren assembled to bless God for mercies on the anniversary of that day bestowed—the faithful pastor there, his daughter that day united to a worthy husband, himself that day blessed with a son who was following in his footsteps, a faithful watchman on the walls of Zion—as I looked upon such a scene, the past flitted rapidly before me, and I grasped the hand of Mr. Brown, and uttered all my lips could speak—"Bless God

for this happy day !” He turned, and looking me full in the face, said, as a tear stood in his eye,—“Fifteen years ago to-day !”—and his utterance failed him, for our hearts were full. Never met, around a family board, a happier circle than that which on this day assembled at the table of the founder of DINGLE PARISH.

